THE Manley

Afflicted Man's Companion:

OR, A

DIRECTORY

FOR

PERSONS and FAMILIES,

AFFLICTED WITH

Sickness, or any other Distress.

WITH

DIRECTIONS to the SICK,

Both under and after Affliction.

ALSO.

DIRECTIONS to the Friends of the SICK, and others who visit them. And likewise to ALL, how to prepare both for SICKNESS and DEATH; and how to be Exercised at the time of Dying.

TO WHICH IS ADDED.

A Collection of Comfortable Texts of Scripture, very suitable for dying Believers.—The Choice Sayings of many Eminent Dying Saints.—The Author's Last Advice to his Wife and Children: And his Dying Words, written by himself, and found among his Papers after his Death.

By the Reverend Mr. JOHN WILLISON,
Late Minister of the Gospel in DUNDEE.

Very Necessary for all Families.

FALKIRK:

PRINTED AND SOLD BY PATRICK MAIR,

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TO THE

READER

THE subject of this Book, however melancholy it may appear to some, yet it is necessary unto all; seeing the word of God, and our own experience do assure us, that "man who is born of a woman, is of sew days, and full of trouble;" and that he "is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upward" Nay, God's dearest children are not exempted from this common sate. We see what is the character God giveth his church, Isa. liv. 11. O thou afflicted, and tossed with tempest, and not comforted!"

If in this world then we must look for tribulation, it is highly necessary for every man to seek direction how to provide for it, and behave under it, so as he may glorify God, edify others, and attain to eternal happiness at last. The tribulations we have to look for here are manifold; but among these that are outward, I know none about which men ought to be more thoughtful and concerned, than bodily sickness, that usual harbinger of death, and which ushers the way to judgment.

This is a subject not much handled in public sermons, which are delivered only to them that are in health, the sick being incapable to attend them. Wherefore it seems the more necessary to handle it in writing, that so the afflicted may have a book in their houses, and at their bed-sides, as a monitor to preach to them in private, when they are restrained from hearing sermons in public.

And though sometimes ministers sermons may be very suitable to the case of the sick and afflicted; yet, alas! the most part are careless and forgetful hearers of these things while they are in health and prosperity, as reckoning the evil day at some distance from them. A book then, such as the following Directory, being with them in time of sickness and affliction, may, by the divine blessing, be useful to bring to their remembrance these counsels and ad-

monitions which they very much neglected in the time of their health.

Again, ministers of the gospel, though never so much inclined to attend the sick, yet by reason of disability and multiplicity of other work, cannot be always with them, to direct, resolve, and comfort them. But such a book as

this they may have still at hand to consult with.

And in regard the afflicted, for the most part, are out of case to read for themselves, it would be a most charitable work for friends or neighbours that attend them, to lay hold on proper seasons for reading such a book as this in their hearing, and especially such chapters or directions as they judge most suitable for them. Thus you might be helped in some measure to exoner your consciences, and do your last offices of kindness to your sick and dying friends, when you can serve them no longer in this world.

I might have brought in, and handled some controverasies (had I been sond of them) in the ensuing treatise, about the administration of the Lord's supper to the sick, and about extreme unction, which some also begin to plead for, and thence have taken occasion to touch at some other new usages, such as the Middle State, Prayers for the Dead, and other Popish errors, that some (called Protestants) would have revived and introduced among us. But I have industriously shunned what is controversial, and kept close to what is practical, and owned by all true Christians.

For preventing the growth of these, and other errors, (from which this nation hath been much longer free than others), I wish all ranks among us would closely observe the sacred rule of faith, God's word, and remember the solemn and national engagements we of this land are under, to maintain the pure truths of God therein contained, in opposition to all sorts of error, whether Popish, Pelagian, Arian, Antinomian. &c. And may we ever abhor the doctrine that would teach us to break these bands asunder.

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Have we not ground this day, to suspect that Satan is carrying on a deep and subtle plot for shaking our co-

venanted reformation, and weakning a Protestant interest? when, upon the one hand, some are beginning openly to advance and propagate the old abjured Popish doctrines, which our reformers did throw out, and with axes and hammers would go at once to cut down all our carved work; and at the fame time, on the other hand, some would be at the breaking down the excellent fences of our reformation, viz. our covenants, confessions, the magistrates power, &c. For this end, papers are spread, and politions advanced, impugning the warrantableness of our national covenants and confessions, and the obligation thereof; reflecting also upon our worthy reformers and ancestors, as unenlightened, who framed and took them, or died adhering thereunto; and also denying the magistrate's power circa facra, (for the support of truth, and suppressing of heresies), accknowledged by the word of God, and our Confession of Faith; and all this, forfooth, to make way for a toleration of all errors and fects among us: though they cannot but know, that tolerating of false religions is expressly ranked among the fins forbidden in the fecond commandment, according to the expolition of our Larger Catechism; and is also condemned by the xxiiid chapter of our Confession: in both which, we may see the clear scripture-texts, cited by the Assembly, for refuting and condemning any such Ah! what joy may all this cause at Rome! toleration. therefore tell it not in Gath, &c.

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As the Lord did fignally countenance our reformers practice, in entering into folem and national covenants with God, and among themselves, for religion and reformation, by the pouring out of his Spirit from on high, for bringing in of many fouls to himself, and for overturning idolatry and superstition and advancing reformation to a great pitch, in spite of all the enemies and difficulties that were in the way; fo their practice of national covenanting, even under the New-Testament dispensation, is fufficiently warranted both by the light of nature, and by the word of God, and that in both Testaments. And this will appear, if we consider the scripture-precedents,

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together with the promises and prophecies of the Old Testament relating to gospel-times, and compare them with the New; and especially these which foretel the unchurching of the Jewish nation, and the ingrafting of the Gentile nations in their room; and that thereupon the national church-state and privileges of the Jews, were to be transferred to Christian nations, and particularly this of being nationally in covenant with God. Which prophecies are to have their special and full accomplish. ment at Bablyon's downfal. For illustrating these points, and applying the scripture-texts relative thereto, I might expatiate in feveral sheets of paper, if it were proper here. I shall only at this time cite some of the texts that may be well improven to the foresaid purposes; which the reader may turn to, and confider at his leifure, fuch as Ifa. xix. 18, 21, 23, 24, 25. Ifa. xlv. 23. Jer.l. 4, 5 the lx. lxi. and lxii. chapters of liaiah through-Ita. lv. 3, 4. 5. Micah iv. 1, 2. Zech.viii 21, 22, 23. Rev. ii. 15 Rom. xi. 17, 19. Rom. x. 12, 19. Matth. iii. 5, 6. Acts viii. 6, 12. 2 Cor. viii 5 Matth. xxi. 43. Rom. ix 24, 25, 26. compared with Hof. i. 9, 10, 11. Hof. ii. 23. Likewise I might cite several prophecies with respect to the islands, and utmost ends of the earth, which were peopled by Japhet; that have a very peculiar and favourable aspect to this covenanted land.

Besides all which, it is evident from the first and great command of the law, which is directed to Israel as a nation, and obligatory under the New Tastament as well as the Old, that it is a moral duty universally and perpetually binding upon nations and societies, as well as single persons, to chuse, acknowledge, and avouch the Lord to be their God, to walk in his ways, and keep his statutes. This is required in the first commandment, according to the exposition of our Larger Catechism; and is there confirmed by these texts, that warrant and exemplify the practice of national covenanting, such as Deut. xxvi. 16, 17. Josh. xxiv. 22. In such a national way did our fathers of old acknowledge and avouch the Lord to be their God, and devote themselves and their posterity to

the Lord. And bleffed be the Lord our God, who did many ways declare himfelf to be well pleafed with the bargain, and especially by filling the temple with his glory.

As the prophets and godly Jews were at great pains to convey to potterity historical accounts of the wonderful deliverances God wrought for Israel at the Red-sea, and in rescuing them from Egypt, Babylon, and other enemies: so it would be useful to fortify our reformation, if we were careful to hand down to the rising generation a sense of God's distinguishing mercies to this land, in delivering us from spiritual Babylon, and in rescuing us from time to time from these captains that have sought to lead us back thither. Many a-time hath he delivered

us, when we have been brought very low.

By many instances it hath appeared, that the glorious JEHOVAH hath not been afhamed to own his covenant. relation to this finful and unworthy land. God forbid that we of this age should be ashamed to own our covenant-relation to him. This hath been both our glory and our safety; and I hope, their will still be found a remnant to own it, and plead it with God in the time of danger. Surely, it is not time now to disclaim it, when the enemies of our Zion are combining together, and feeking to raze her to the foundation. Let all her lovers ery mightily to her covenanted Lord, in her behalf, in thefe thaking times: let them join to put up that prayer of the Pfalmist, Pfal. lxviii. 28. " Strengthen, O God. that which thou halt wrought for us;" and that of Habakkuk, Hab. iii. 2. " O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years." May 27. 1727.

N. B. The foresaid digression in the presace to the sirst edition was occasioned by the broaching of some secturian notions, which introduced great reelings and hakings in this corner, and other parts of this church; ince which time, alas! she hath enjoyed little peace within her walls, or prosperity within her palaces; but, instead thereof, she hath been tossed with tempests and roubles of various kinds, whereby the children of Zion are been brought and still-lie under great distress and

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The first impression of this book being disposed of, and a second called for, I have the more readily consented to it, at this time of general calamity and distress, seeing the book is intended as a directory to Christians under affliction, whatever sort it be. It cannot but be obvious to every serious observer, that the Lord's judgments are in the earth at this day, and that the inhabitants of this land are generally visited with calamities of divers kinds, both spiritual and temporal; which makes a Directory how to manage and carry under them the more seasonable

and necessary.

Ah! the Lord's hand is visibly lifted up against us at this day, and hath been for some years past, in shutting up the church's womb, blafting gospel ordinances, and withdrawing his Spirit from the affemblies of his people, and from our judicatories. The flood gate is opened for error, infidelity, and loofeness to overspread the land; so that the gospel of Christ, the holy scriptures, and all revealed religion, are contemned and ridiculed by many. "The anger of the Lord hath divided us both in church and state, and hath mingled a perverse spirit in the midst of us;" yea, hath made such woful breaches amongst godly ministers and Christians, who are aiming at the same things, that no balm can be found for healing them. There is a way opened for a carnal felf-feeking ministry to get into the vineyard, when faithful labourers are thrust out, and godly preachers and students are discouraged from entering in. Not a few Christian congregations, who lately were harmonious and united in partaking of gospel-ordinances, are now so miserably rent and scattered, through mournful intrusions, and dividing courses, that they cannot worship God together; and many of them are wandering like sheep having no shepherd, exposed to beasts of prey, and liable to perish in a state of ignorance or negligence.

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L'kewise, the Lord's hand is remarkably listed up against us, in the variety of temporal judgments and calamities brought upon us within a very short time bypast. Sometimes the Lord sends forth his stormy winds with

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extraordinary violence, so as to carry terror and destruction alongst with them both by sea and land, and even threaten to bury us in the ruins of our houses. Sometimes he fends fuch long continued rains in time of harvest, as threaten to destroy the whole crop before our eyes. Sometimes such extraordinary storms of frost and snow. as to bind up the waters and mills, that food cannot be prepared for us, and we are ready to famish in midst of plenty. Sometimes he fends such destructive storms of lightening and thunder from heaven, and kindles fuch violent fires on earth, that whole cities with their inhabitants are like to be confumed therewith. Upon our neighbouring countries dreadful inundations have been fent of late, for destroying the inhabitants with their Again, God hath vifited us with long cattle and effects. continued drought, cold, and unnatural florms in the spring, and sometimes with frost in midst of summer, which have brought on extraordinary scarcity and dearth of victual; so that there are great disorders committed in the land by riots and tumults for want of food, and multitudes of families are diffolved, and forced to wander begging their bread; and the cattle also are familied for want of grass and food to sustain them. In the mean time we are engaged in war with cruel enemies, who feize our ships, carry our countrymen captive, throw them into dungeons and noisome prisons, where they use them barbarously; yea, much of their blood is shed, and many valuable lives are lost in our defence. And besides our other calamities, we fuffer greatly through decay of trade and merchandise, and penury of money: in many places merchants, tradefmen and artificers want bufiness; there is no work nor hire for labourers, and for those who would use honest industry for bread, whether men or women; so that want is "come upon us as one that travelleth, and poverty like an armed man;" and many are reduced to extreme misery, and starving circumstances for lack of bread.

By all which proceedings it appears that God hath a peculiar controversy with Scotland, and threatens to

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punish her remarkably for her hainous fins and provocations. The Lord's hand hath been long lifted up against us, and now it is higher lifted up than ever; and the higher it is lifted up, the blow is like to be the severer when given. He hath fent many leffer strokes and judgments upon us, as forerunners and warnings of greater, which he hath still in referve for us, if we repent not; for his magazine is far from being exhaulted. are many causes for these calamities of ours, so I think there is a principal one mentioned, Matth. xxiv. 12. "Iniquity doth abound, and the love of many is waxed cold." Infidelity, immorality, and contempt of the gospel, are come to a prodigious height; our hearts are become cold and frozen to Christ and his interest, to his people and holy laws; for which cause God is provoked to fend such judicial cold and frosts upon our land, and the fruits of the earth, fo as to mar and diminish our crops, and reduce both men and beafts to the greatest straits .-And yet so great is our impenitency and perverseness, that we will not see the Lord's hand, nor be reformed by all these judgments.

It might well be expected, when the Lord's judgments are fo visibly in the earth, that not only his people by profession, but even the inhabitants of the world would learn righteousness, according to Isa. xxvi. o But, alas! so perverse are we in walking contrary to God, that neither the inhabitants of the world, nor these who profess to be separated from the world, will alter their course, nor learn righteousness; nay, instead of that, many are learning still more wickedness. " Shall I not visit for these things? faith the Lord: and shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?" Alas! hath he not been provoked to fay concerning us, as he did concerning his ancient people, Lev xxvi 23, 24. " If ye will not be reformed by these things, but will walk contrary unto me; then will I also walk contrary unto you, and will bring feven times more plagues upon you, according to your fins." And likewise to say unto us, as unto them, "When ye ipread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; and when ye fast and make many prayers, I will not hear; but I will consume you with the sword, with the samine, and with the pestilence," as in Isa. i. 15. Jer. xiv. 12.

The fword, famine, and pestilence, are God's three mortal arrows, which he commonly threatens to shoot against impenitent and incorrigible offenders. Two of thefe are already that against us: the fword is drawn, and much of our countrymen's blood is already shed; and what further streams of it may flow before it be put up in its heath, God only knows. The evil arrow of famine (as God calls it, Ezek.v. 16.) is let fly against us at the same time, and famine is the arrow which is the forest of the three. When it was put to David's choice which of the three he would be the butt of, he' would not chuse famine. The prophet Joel doth bewail and deprecate this judgment in the most pathetic manner, and calls the whole. land to fasting and prayer for removing it, Joel i. 10, 14. and we see, when God is most angry, and threatens to fpend his arrows upon a guilty people, he begins with the arrow of famine, as the forest, as in Deut. xxxii. 23, 24. "I will spend mine arrows upon them; they shall be burnt with hunger." And we fee what the Spirit of God faith of these who die by this arrow, Lam. iv. o. "They that be flain with the sword are better than they that be flain with hunger; for these pine away, stricken through for want of the fruits of the field;" and therefore their death is most lingering and miserable. Likewise famine useth to bring on the most noisome and mortal diseases. and frequently the pestilence doth-follow upon the back of famine. Is it not high time then, for our land to take the alarm, when God begins to shoot his evil arrows? When the lion roars, it becomes us to fear, yea, to humble ourselves in the dust, and mourn for our iniquities. which kindle the fire of his wrath.

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Let us fearch and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord, from whom we have deeply revolted: and particularly, let us mourn for and turn from these sins which the word of God points out as bringing on famine; such as, 1. Ascribing our earthly comforts and blessings to

other things than God, the true author. This fin we find threatened with scarcity and famine, Jer. xliv. 17, 26, 27. Hof. ii. 5, 9. 2. Perverting of plenty to luxury and prodigality, fenfuality and excess, revellings and dancings, Salls and affemblies. We fee how thefe are threatened, Ifa. v. 11, 12, 13. Amos vi. 4, 6, 7. 3. Rejecting the bread of life, and despising the food of our souls. God wheth to punish men for this fin, by depriving them of bread for their bodies, Jer. xi. 21, 22. 4. Mens minding their own things more than the things of God; and neglecting to build his house, and put respect upon his ordinances. Upon fuch accounts God brings on fearcity and famine, Hag. i. 9, 10, 11. 5. Covenant breaking, and dealing cruelly with the poor, or with strangers that live among us; it is for these sins that God sent the three years famine upon the land of Ifrael, 2 Sam. xxi. 1.

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Morover, let us look upon all these temporal storms and calamities which are come, or coming upon the land, as warnings to prepare for a more awful florm that we must all meet with, namely, the storm of death and judgment; let us stand habitually prepared for that storm, and then other storms will not so much affect us. If it be asked, What we shall do to be safe in the time of that trying florm? the answer is, Let us see that we be among the broken in heart, or fincere penitents, who are hear. tily grieved for all known fins : that we be true believers in Christ, who trust in nothing but his righteousness and merits for justification and salvation; that we be born again, and made new creatures by a faving change both in heart and life: that it be our great business to clear up our evidences of peace with God through Christ, and of our title to the mansions which he hath purchased by his blood. O that God's judgments, when they are in the earth, were means to awaken us to flee from the wrath to come, to Christ our refuge! When the floods of great waters are swelling up to the brim, our only fafty is to fecure a hiding-place in Christ's wounds.

Let us follow the example of Noah, who when he faw the flood coming, took warning, and prepared an ark for faving himself and his household, Heb. xi. 7. Let us even imitate the Egyptians that seared the Lord; they, when warned of the dreadful storm of hail that was coming on the land, made their servants and cattle to see into the houses, Exod. ix. 20. God hath in mercy provided chambers for his people to hide themselves in when storms are coming, even the chambers of his attributes and promises, and the chambers of Christ's wounds and intercession; in these only we can find safety: let us then enter into them by faith, when he invites us, Isa xxvi. 20, 21.

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Seeing, in these evil days, we have so many harbingers and forerunners of death before our eyes, it will be highly our wisdom to keep ourselves still in a waiting posture, always ready and willing to die. What is there in this weary land to tempt us to defire to abide in it? Is it not a land overwhelmed with fin and forrow? O believers, are you toffed with tempelts here? Seek the wings of a dove, that you may flee away, and be at rest. Be habitually desiring to depart, that you may be with Christ. Surely for you to die is gain, yea, infinite gain! What are the imaginary pleasures of this world to the real happiness of the next? Though the struggles of death be grievous to nature, yet the gain of dying should reconcile you to it. You do not stick at the trouble of putting off your cloaths at night, to gain a little rest to your bodies; and why should you stick at uncloathing yourselves of the garment of flesh at God's call, to gain everlasting rest to your souls, and the fruition of Christ's glorious presence for ever? Let the thoughts of this gain put you upon using all means to get your hearts weaned from the love of the world, and its comforts. Keep the mantle of earthly enjoyments hanging loofe about you, especially in these calamitous times, that so it may be easily dropt when death comes to carry you to the eternal world. O for more of the lively faith of that world, and of him that is the Lord and purchaser of it! But seeing this subj et is more largely infisted on in the book itself, I shall add no more here upon it. Only I shall subjoin a collection of some sweet and comfortable texts of scripture, very proper for dying believers to meditate and feed on by faith, to grip to and plead with God, and fuck confolation from, when they have a near prospect of going through the dark valley, and entering into the unknown regions of eternity. God's word will then be our hope.

Comfortable Texts for Dying Believers.

COME unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest, Matth. xi. 28. Him that com-

eth to me, I will in no wife cast out, John vi. 37.

In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you: I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to myself, that where I am, there ye may be also, John xiv. 2, 3.

Because I live, ye shall live also, John xiv. 19.

CHRIST faith, "Surely I come quickly." Answ. "Amena Even so, come Lord Jesus," Rev. xxii. 20.

There remaineth a rest to the people of God, Heb. iv. 9. I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord, Gen. xlix. 18.

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Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace. For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Luke ii. 29, 30.

He is the rock, and his work is perfect, Deut. xxxii. 4.

The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me, Pfal. exxxviii.8. Being confident—that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ, Philip. i. 6.

I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my slesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me, Job xix. 25, 26, 27.

Although my house be not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me, Psal. xxiii. 4.

Into thine hand I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth, Psal. xxxi. 5.

For this God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even unto death, Pfal. xlviii. 14.

Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I defire besides thee. My slesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever, Psal. lxxiii. 24, 25, 26.

The facrifices of God are a bocken spirit: a broken and a

contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise, Psal. li. 17.

O that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest. I would hasten my escape from the windy storm and tempest, Psalm. lv. 6, 8.

Though ye have lien among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold, Psal. lxviii. 13.

The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all fin,

I John i. 7.

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Having boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of

Jesus, Heb. x. 19.

He hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, Heb. xiii. 5,8. He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in

mercy, Micah vii. 18.

Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him, Job xiii. 15.

In his name shall the Gentiles trust, Matth. xii. 21.

Blessed are all they that put their trust in him, Psal. ii. 12. He knoweth our frame, he remembereth that we are dust, Psalm ciii. 14.

I lothe it, I would not live alway, Job vii. 16.

We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. We are willing rather to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord, 2 Cor.v.1,8.

For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. Having a defire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better, Philip.

And now, Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in thee, Pfal.

XXXIX. 7.

My beloved is mine, and I am his. His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me. Awake, O north-wind, and come, thou fouth, blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out: let my Beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits. Uutil the day break, and shadows slee away. Make hast, my Beloved, and be thou like to a roe, or a young hart on the mountains of spices, Cant. ii. 6, 16, 17. and iv. 16. and viii. 14.

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O death, where is thy fling? O grave, where is thy victory? But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, through

our Lord Jesus Christ, 1 Cor. xv. 55. 57.

The time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Hence forth there is laid up for me a crown of righteoutness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing, 2 Tim. iv. 6, 7, 8.

The day of death is better than the day of one's birth,

Eccles vii. 1.

And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither forrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away, Rev. xxi. 4.

This is a faithful faying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am

chief, I Tim. i. 15.

God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that who soever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life, John iii. 16.

For he hath made him to be fin for us, who knew no fin; that we might be made the righteougness of God in him,

2 Cor. v. 21.

Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift, 2 Cor. ix. 15. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited and redeemed his people, and hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David, Luke i. 68, 69.

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Them which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him. Then shall we be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the

Lord, 1 Theff. iv. 14, 17.

Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our fins in his own blood, &c. Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and glory, Rev. i. 5. and v. 12.

We know that we have passed from death unto life, because

we love the brethren, I John iii. 14.

I am perfuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord, Rom. viii. 38, 39.

I know whom I have believed, and I am perfunded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day, 2 Tim. i. 12.

I count all things but loss and dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, &c.

Philip. iii. 8, 9.

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Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and right-cousness, and fanctification, and redemption, I Cor. i. 30.

We rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the

flesh, Philip. iii. 3.

Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the faints in light, Col. i. 12.

Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him. Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus, Rev. i. 7. and xxii. 20.

DUNDEE, 5th June, 1741.

Some of the Author's DYING EJACULATIONS, as they were written by himself a few days before he died, and left with his Bible lying on his pillow, the----day

of May, 1750.

O Let me sleep in Jesus!

I would not live aways in this evil world, that has little in it tempting, and seems still to grow worse, and where the

torrent of fin and backfliding feems to grow stronger.

I would defire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better than to be here. I am willing rather to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth I desire besides thee: for though my heart, strength, and sless fail; yet the Lord will be the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.

Now, Lord, what wait I for; my hope is in thee; I have

waited for thy falvation, O Lord.

O for Simeon's frame, to be faying, "Lord, now lettest thou thy fervant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy falvation."

When Christ says, "Surely I come quickly;" may my foul

answer, "Even so, come Lord Jesus."

I am living on the righteousness of Christ, yea, dving in the Lord. Even to come. I am detained here upon the shore, waiting for a fair wind to carry me over this Jordan. I have wait-

B 3

ed, and will wait for thy falvation, O Lord. The Lord is a Rock, and his work is perfect: Lord, perfect what concernethme.

O that I could fay with Paul, "The time of my departure is at hand. I have kept the faith, I have fought the good fight, I have run my race, I have finished my course; henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the righteous Lord will give me at his coming."

I am vile and polluted, O how shall I be cleansed! But that is a comfortable promise, "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." And so is that, "Though ye have lain among the pots, ye shall be as doves, whose wings are co-

vered with filver, and their feathers with yellow gold."

I resolve to obey, to submit to the Lord's will, to die like Moses and Aaron, the one at mount Hor, the other at mount Abarim. They went up, and died there at the command of the Lord.

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O that when my flesh and strength fail, God may be the strength of my heart, and my rion for ever! When now the keepers of the house do tremble, O that God may be the keeper! when the grinders cease, because they are sew, O that God would feed my soul with manna, that will need none of these implements! when the daughters of music are brought low, O to be sitted for the heavenly music above! when the lookers out at the windows are darkened, O that my soul may be enlightened to see Jesus my Redeemer.

Lord, help the unbelief and infidelity of my heart; and help to more of the faith of a risen Jesus, and ascended Redeemer. O let me believe and feel the sweetness of that word of Christ, "I ascend to my Father and your Father, and to my God and

your God."

O how shall such an unholy creature as I presume into such a pure and holy place! But the apostle has taught us, we may have boldness to enter into the holiest of all by the blood of Jesus.

O that when the time of my last combat comes with my last enemy death, I may be helped above all to take the shield of faith, whereby I my be relieved from the sting of death, and may quench the siery darts of the wicked one.

O that I may be helped to adore the sovereignty of God, kis his rod, and humbly submit to it. Save me from both extremes; let me never despise the chastning of the Lord, nor faint when I am rebuked of him.

Now the prince of darkness will study to raise tempests of temptations to shipwreck the poor weather-beaten vessel of my soul, when it would enter into the harbour of rest above; may Christ come to be pilot, steer the helm, and it shall be safe.

O for more faith! may my faith ripen to a full assurance, that I may go off the stage rejoicing, and that an abundant entrance may be ministered to me into the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

O for more faith, that I may die like Simeon when he had Christ in his arms, saying, "Now let thy sevant depart in peace, mine eyes have seen thy salvation."

Lord, one smile of thy countenance would banish away all

my doubts and fears, and make me fing in pains.

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Is my Redeemer gone to prepare a place for us? why should I be so slothful to follow his steps, when he is saying, Come up hither; come up, dwell here; come up, reign here; come up, sing here?

O Lord, deliever my foul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling. O have me from the horrible pit, draw me out of the miry clay, fet my feet upon a rock, and

establish my goings, and put a new song in my mouth.

O give grace to strive by faith and prayer to enter in at the strait gate. Lord, thou hast bid me knock, and it shall be opened; ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find. Lord, I knock, open unto me; Lord, I would be in, I must be in; let me but in over the threshold; let me in within sight of my Redeemer's face, within sight of the smiles of his countenance; let me within hearing of the songs of the Redeemed; let me get to the outside of that praising company; I will be well enough if I get in.

Lord, in I must be, out I cannot stay: O shut me not out with swearers, Sabbath-breakers, and profane persons. Lord, I never chused their company while in this world; Lord, do

not gather my foul with finners hereafter.

The redeemed are gathering, and the wicked are gathering, Lord, gather me with thy flock: they are fast a gathering; the church's head is gone; he has left the earth, and entered into his glory; my brethren and friends, many of them have arrived where he is; I am yet behind. O how great is the difference betwixt my state and theirs. I am groaning out my complaint, they are singing God's praise: I am in darkness, and cannot see thy face, but they behold thee face to face. O should I be satisfied to stay behind, when my friends are gone! Shall I wan-

der here in a hungry defart, when they are triumphing above, and dividing the spoil? O help me to look after them with a

Redfast eye, and cry, O Lord, how long!

O heavenly Father, draw me after Jesus; for none can come to him without thy aid. O Father, draw me up there where he is, and I will mount up as on eagle's wings. O draw me; and when thou seemest to fly from me, Lord, enable me to follow hard after thee.

Lord, give me the staff of a promise in my hand, that I may go over Jordan with it. O give me such a promise as that, "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the rivers they shall not overslow thee. When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the slame kindle upon thee."

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Lord, my experiences are small, my manifestations few; these I will not lean to: yet I will remember thee from the land of Jordan, from the Hermonites, and from the hill Mizar. Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why disquieted within me? hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the

health of my countenance, and my God.

to thy kingdom, O remember me when now feated in thy kingdom, and fay to my foul, when I am dying, "This day shalt

thou be with me in paradife."

Lord, I am called to the work I never did, O give me the ftrength I never had. O strengthen me like Samson for this once, when at death, to pull down the strong holds of sin in me. Lord, wash away my sins in the blood of Christ, and then

my foul fhall not fink in the ocean of thy wrath.

O what is my life but a vapour! a fand-glass of fixty or feventy years! O how fast does it run down! how soon runs it out! Vain, vain is the love of life! O give me grace to overcome the love of life, and the fear of death. O for more patience and less fretting. If the damned had hope of being saved from hell after a thousand years of my pain, how willingly would they endure it? Blessed be God, my pains are not hell, their state is not mine.

Lord, draw near to me, and fave me; my body is full of trouble, and my life draws near to the grave. But, Lord, thy loving-kindness is better than life; O make thy loving-kindness fure to me, and I will willingly part with this dying life.

Oh that I could make all the world fee the beauty of my precious and adorable Saviour.

Nothing but an interest in Christ can give peace in life, or comfort in death. He is the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely.—My body is in part dead, but I know, I cannot die eternally while Jesus lives. I must go down to the grave; but what is the grave; it is but a refining pot since my Saviour lay in it, it is but a bed of roses. "He is the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valley.

It was his free grace that drew me, and made me willing in the day of his power; no desire, no merit in me, it was all free

and undeferving.

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O let the chastisement of my body be the medicine of my soul, to cure me of sin, and bring me to sincere repentance for it: for Christ was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him.

Lord, remember the chastisement of Christ for sin, and let my pains be the chastisement of a father, and not the wounds

of an enemy. Let Christ's fufferings mitigate mine:

I rejoice in the prospect of that glorious inheritance reserved safe.—I could not comfortably euter eternity any other way but in and through this God-man Mediator; if he was not God as well as man I could not be supported, but he is God.

Oh, this precious Saviour, he is my all in all; he is my all-fufficient good, my portion, and my choice; in him my vast desires are sulfilled, and all my powers rejoice; I am travelling through a wilderness to a city of habitation, whose

builder and maker is God.

Oh, delightful thought! that I, who was going on in fin, should be plucked as a brand out of the burning.—Oh, how will they lie on a death-bed that have nothing but their own works to fly to! with only this to depend on, I should be the most miserable of all creatures; but the long white robe of my Redeemer's righteousness is all my desire. They are truly blessed, they alone are happy, who are enabled to exult in the garment of celestial glory, which never waxeth old, in the illustrious robes of a Saviour's consummate righteousness, which are incorruptible and immortal. This is a robe which hides every sin, of thought, word, or deed, that I have committed.—O how unspeakably happy are they, who are justified by this all-perfect righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, and who therein can constantly triumph and glory!

Lord, I live upon Christ, I live upon his righteousness, I live apon his blood and merits; yea, I die also leaning wholly upon

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this bottom. It is not past experiences of manisestations I depend upon: it is Christ a present all-sufficient Saviour, and perfect righteousness in him, I look to. All my attainments are but loss and dung besides him.

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When I find myself polluted, I go to this fountain for cleanfing. Lord, give me delight in approaching to thee; delight to be at a throne of grace. O that I could make my bed there,

lie and die there!

The kingdom of heaven fuffers violence, and the violent take it by force. O for strength to offer a holy violence by faith and prayer.

Thus the author died as he lived, testifying the power of religion upon himself; and that at a time when men have most need of its comforts. The foregoing words are transcribed from his own manuscript, now lying in the hands of MrBell, minister at Aberbrothock." WILLIAM BELL.

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Afflicted Man's Companion:

OR,

A Directory for a Family or Person under Affliction, by Sickness or otherwise.

The INTRODUCTION.

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AN, when he first dropt from his Maker's hands, was a holy and innocent creature, pure from fin, and confequently free from fickness and trouble, enjoying uninterrupted health and prosperity both in body and soul. But no fooner was he tainted with fin, but he became liable to all forts of miseries, temporal, spiritual, and eternal: his soul being the residence of sins and lusts, his body turned the receptacle of sickness and diseases. feeing God's own children have the relicks of fin and corruption in them, while in this world, they are not to expect exemption from fuch afflictions; and the infinitely wife God fees meet to make use of bodily distempers to correct the corruptions, and try the graces of his people, and to promote both their spiritual and ternal advantage, Hence it is said of Lazarus, John xi. 3. " Behold, he whom thou lovest, is He was beloved, and yet fick. It is no are thing for the dearest of God's saints to be put to chatter like cranes, and mourn like loves, by reason of sore sickness; as Hezekiah

did, Ifa. xxxviii. 14. Sanctified and healthy fouls may be matched with weak and fickly bodies, as was Gaius, 3 John 2. Notwithstanding the case is sometimes most trying and exercifing to the best of God's people: and they are never more ready to question God's love, or quarrel with his providence, than under heavy fickness and bodily distress. It is therefore highly the concernment of all, whether families or private persons, to enquire how they ought to behave under or after afflicting sickness; and how they shall provide for such an evil time before it come. And for the help of all that defire instruction in this matter, I have written the following directory; which, for method's sake, I shall divide into several chapters.

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I. I shall give some general directions to all families and persons visited with sickness and affliction.

II. Some particular directions to those who are sharply afflicted with fore sickness and long trouble.

III. Directions to the children of God under sickness.

IV. Directions to unregenerate persons under sickness.

V. Directions to the people of God, when recovered from sickness.

VI. Directions to unrenewed persons recovered from sickness.

VII. Directions to those sick persons, who are apparently in a dying condition.

VIII. Directions to the relations, acquaintances and neighbours of the fick, who are themselves in health for the time.

N. B. Let it be remembered, that what I fay to those visited with sickness, is likewise applicable to all other afflicted persons, whatever their distress be.

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CHAP. I.

Containing general directions to all families and persons visited with sickness

DIRECT. I. Diligently enquire into the ends and defigns, for which usually God sends sickness and affliction upon Persons.

A N infinitely holy and gracious God hath various and wife ends in afflicting the children of men, whether they be converted or unconverted; which ought to be duly confidered by all, and especially by those who are visited with sickness; some whereof I shall instance.

I. God visits with sickness, to cause careless sinners bethink themselves concerning their souls estate and condition, who perhaps had never a serious thought about it before. There are many who, when in health and strength, are so intent upon the pleasures and profits of the world, that they mind nothing else; all the warnings, exhortations and counsels of ministers, teachers, and friends, are tost upon them: They cannot endure to entertain a thought of God, of the soul, of death, of heaven, of hell, or of judgment to come; till God

doth cast them into some sickness or bodily distress; and then, fometimes, they begin, with the prodigal, to come to themselves, and bethink themselves, concerning their souls, and a future life. Now, this is God's design, 1 Kings viii. 47. " If they bethink themselves in the land whe-" ther they they are carried captives, and repent," &c. By fickness, God gives a man, that before was wholly diverted from foul-matters by business, company, and pleasures, occasion to bethink himself. The man is now confined to his chamber, is deprived of his former company and diversions, and so gets time and leafure to commune with his own heart, and reflect on his former ways, and to hear what conscience speaks concerning a judgment day, and a world to come, and the need of a Saviour. And so, by the bleffing of God upon fuch afflictions, not a few have begun their first acquaintance with God and Christ, and serious religion. Nay, the furnace is Christ's usual work-house, where he has formed the most excellent vessels of honour and praise, Ifa. xlviii. 10. " I have chosen "thee in the furnace of affliction." Manaffeh, the Prodigal, Paul, and the Jailor, were all chosen there.

II. God visits us with sickness, in order to instruct and teach us these things we know not, Psal. xcvi. 12. It was a saying of Luther, Schola crucis est schola lucis. And indeed the school of affliction is the place where many of Zion's scholars have made good proficiency in spiritual and experimental knowledge.—

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Now, there are feveral remarkable lessons

which God would teach us by the rod.

If, The knowledge of God. it is said of Manasseh, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 12, 13. "When he was brought to affliction, &c. then Manasseh knew that the Lord he was God." Though Manasseh was well educated, and early taught the knowledge of God, yet till now he knew not the Lord: But now he knew him in his power and greatness, his holiness and hatred of sin; now he knew God in his goodness and mercy, and wondered that he had kept him so long out of hell.

adly, Another lesson is the knowledge of ourselves. In time of health and prosperity, we are apt to forget ourselves, and our mortality: but sickness causeth us to know that we are but men, and frail men, Psal. ix. 20. that God hath an absolute sovereignty over us, and can as

easily crush us, as we do a moth.

adly, He teacheth us the emptiness of the world. How vain a help is that, which fails a man in the time of his greatest need! and oft-times we see, that worldly means and friends can neither give the least ease to the bodies, nor comfort to the souls of persons under sickness and distress.

which is the cause of all sicknesses and diseases whatsoever, I Cor. xi. 30. "For this cause "many are weak and sickly among you."—Ah! what a root of bitterness must that be, which brings forth such bitter fruit!

C 3

excellency of Christ and his promises; which only can enable a Christian to rejoice in tribulation, and be easy under the greatest pains and diseases. There are many who are indifferent about Christ in time of health, that when sickness comes, do change their note, and cry, O for an interest in Christ, above all things!

HI. God fends fuch trials and distresses, in order to mortify and kill fin in us, Ifa. xxvii. 9. " By this shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, " and this is all the fruit to take away his fin." And indeed fickness and affliction, through the bleffing of God, hath a native tendency to weaken and subdue our prevailing fins and lusts. O man, is thy heart turned hard, so as thou art not sensible of thy own fins, or of others sufferings? God fees meet to try the fire of affliction, to fee if it will melt thy frozen heart. thou undervalued health, and flighted thy mercies? Now God removes them from thee, that by the want of them, thou mayest know the worth of them. Art thou turned proud and self-conceited? God sends thee a thorn in the flesh, to prick the swoln bladder of pride, that thou mayest not be puffed up above measure; God lays thee low upon thy bed, that thou mayest be lowly in thy heart. Doth love to the world prevail in thee? God fends affliction to discover its emptiness, and wean thee from Art thou fallen secure, dead, and formal? God fends affliction to awake thee, that thou may ft not fleep the fleep of death.

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IV. God fends fickness, to awaken in us the fpirit of prayer and supplication, and make us more earnest and importunate in our addresses. to the throne of grace. There is a great difference betwixt our prayers in health and in fickness, betwixt our humiliations in prosperity, and in advertity In prosperity we pray heavily and drowfily, but adverfity adds wings to our defires. Ifa xxvi 16. Lord, in trouble have they visited thee, they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them. Though they were backward enough to prayer before, yet they pour it out most freely now. The very heathen mariners cried aloud to God in a storm .-What a famous prayer did Manasseh make when he was under his iron fetters! We find it thrice mentioned, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 13, 18, 19. And the voice of fervent prayer, is what the Lord defires to hear.

V. Another end is, to loose our hearts from the things of this world; and cause us to look and long for heaven. When we enjoy health and case in this world, we are apt to say with Peter on the mount, It is good for us to be here: but, when distress cometh, God's people will turn their tongue, and say with the Psalmist, Psal. Ixxiii. 27. It is good for me to draw night to God. When things here go well with us, we are apt to think ourselves at home: but, when trouble ariseth, we begin to say, "Arise, let us depart, this is not our rest" Though heaven was much out of sight and out of mind before, yet, when afflicting sickness comes, the poor believer will sigh, and say with David, Psal. Iv. 6.

O that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest: I would hasten my

escape from the windy tempest.

VI. God deligns to make the world bitter, and Christ sweet to us. By fuch afflictions, he lets men fee, that the world is nothing but vanity and vexation of spirit; that riches avail not in the day of wrath: then it is, that they, may fee the infufficiency of the world to relieve them: that, as one faith, " A velvet-flipper " cannot cure the gout; a golden cap cannot " drive away the head-ach; nor a bed of down " give ease in a fever." And as the world turns bitter, fo Christ grows sweet to the believer. In time of ease and health, Christ is often very much neglected and forgot. As the disciples, while the sea was calm, suffered Christ to sleep. with them in the ship, thinking they might make their voyage well enough without his help; but when they were ready to be drowned, then they fee their need of Christ, they awake him, crying, Master, save us, or else we perish. So. the best of faints, when all is easy about them, are prone to suffer Christ to sleep within them, and so to neglect the lively actings of faith on Christ; but when the storm of assistion begins to arife, and they are ready to be overwhelmed with distress, then they cry, " None but Christ, none but Christ."

VII. God trysts with sickness and distress, in order both to prove and improve his people's graces, Deut. viii 2. Rev. ii. 10. Grace is hereby both tried and strengthened. 1st, Such afflictions do prove both the truth and strength

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of our graces, as they serve to try if we love God for himself; if we can endure and hold out in serving him, waiting and depending upon him, notwithstanding of discouragements. That faith will suffice for a little affliction, that will not suffice for a great one. Peter had faith enough to come upon the sea at Christ's call; but as soon as the waves began to swell, his faith began to fail, and his feet to sink, till Christ mercifully caught hold of him, saying, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" Matth. xiv. 31. Little did Peter think his faith was so weak till now.

adly, They tend to improve our graces alfo, by quickening and strengthening them. They serve as a whetstone to sharpen faith, fo as the foul is made to renounce earthly shelters, and to clasp about God in Christ, as its only refuge and portion. They excite to repentance and ferious mourning for fin; for, like the winter frost and snows, they make the fallow-ground of our heart more tender. They prompt us to heavenly mindedness, self-denial, and-patient waiting on God. Yea, the experience of God's people can attest it, that grace is never more lively, than under affliction. David never found himfelf better, as to his spiritual state, than when he was persecuted and hunted as a partridge on the mountains: and hence he fays, Pfal. cxix. 71. " It is good for me, that "I have been afflisted."

VIII. God's aim is, to awaken us to redeem; time, to prepare for flitting, and clear up our evidences for heaven. In the time of health we

are apt to trifle away time, to loiter in our journey, and forget that we are pilgrims on the earth; wherefore God sends sickness as his

meffenger, to mind us thereof.

Now it highly concerns us, when sickness attacks us, to consider and meditate upon these ends for which God brings on distress, and pray earnestly that they may be accomplished in us; and so our sickness shall not be unto death, (spiritual or eternal), but to the glory of God, and good of our souls.

DIRECT. II. Let all who are visited with sickness and distress, search for the Achan in the camp, and enquire diligently what is the ground and cause of God's controversy with them.

IT hath been the practice of God's people in scripture-times, to enquire into the cause and meaning of God's rods which have been laid upon them. So David, 2 Sam. xxi. when the land of Israel was three years under the stroke of famine, he enquired into the meaning of it. So Job is exceedingly desirous to know why God set him up as a mark for his arrows, Job vii. 20. and hence it is that he makes that petition. Job x. 2. which is most suitable for every man in distress, "Shew me wherefore thou contendest with me."

I grant indeed, that God sometimes visits his people with affliction, for the trial and exercise of their grace, and for their spiritual instruction, more than for the correction of

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their sin. But sin being the original and foundation of all affliction, it is safest, when it is our own case, and most acceptable to God, to look on fin as the procuring cause. Or, if our fins have not immediately procured the prefent affliction, yet the best of God's children must own that they have at least deserved it. We fee the fin of the Corinthians is mentioned as the cause of their sickness, 1 Cor xi 30. " For this cause many are weak and sickly among you." The Pfalmist concludes the very same thing, Pfal. cvii. 17, 18. " Fools, because of " their transgressions, and their iniquities, are " afflicted: their foul abhorreth all manner of " meat; and they draw nigh unto the gates of " death " But ordinarily, by sickness, the Lord points at some one sin in us, more than another, fome Jonah in the ship, that hath raised the florm, which the Lord would have us to fearch. out, and throw over-board without delay.

Quest. But how shall we discover and find out the particular sin for which God afflicts us with sickness and distress?

Ans. 1st, Study the Lord's word, and the chastiscements there recorded, which he hath inflicted upon people for their sins; and enquire if you be guilty of the like. Observe what hath been God's mind to his people, and what sin he hath pointed out to them, when they have been brought under such a rod: and so you may learn his mind to you, Rom. xv. 4. "For whatsoever things were written afore- time, were written for our learning."

2dly, Confider what is the fin which confcience doth most of all accuse thee for, in thy most serious and solitary hours. Conscience is God's deputy, and thy bofom-monitor, whose voice, perhaps, thou hast little regarded in the day of thy health; wherefore God hath fent a fharper meffenger, to second the voice of conscience. Hear now the voice of the rod, for it is the same with the voice of conscience. In the day of prosperity, carnal profits and pleafures made fuch a noise, that the voice of conscience could not be heard; wherefore God hath brought on thee the filent night of adversity, that his deputy may obtain audience. Well then, give car; what faith concience now? may you not hear it faying, as Reuben to his brethren in distress, Spake I not to you in the day of health, do not commit fuch a sin, and do not delay repenting for such a sin, but you would not hear? O man, let conscience get a hearing at last, as it got with the patriarchs, when they were brought to diftress in Egypt, and made them to confess their sin, in felling of Joseph, Gen. xlii. 21. " We are verily " guilty concerning our brother, in that we " faw the anguish of his foul, when he be-" fought us, and we would not hear: therefore " is this diffress come upon us."

3dly, Consider what are these evils, that others have observed in you, whether they be friends or foes. Hearken to what a Christian friend noticeth in you, either when speaking to you, or to others about you. "Let the righter ous smite me, (saith David) and it shall be a

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Ob a dun windness." Yea, do not disregard what even enemies say of you: as David got good by the malicious reproaches of Shimei, in the day of his affliction, so may you, in the time of distress; for, sometimes, malice itself will speak truth. Enemies are sharp-sighted to spy out our faults, and so may, through the divine blessing, prove monitors to us, both with re-

spect to sm and duty.

of thy distres. Oft-times the affliction is so suitable to the transgression, that we may clearly read our sin written on the forehead of our punishment, as in the case of Adonibezek, and many others. And also you may be helped to find it out, by the Lord's timing of the rod to you. Was it sent when you was under much formality in duty? or when you was eagerly pursuing the things of the world? or when you was under the power of some prevailing lust or other? Then the rod comes to reprove you, and awake you to see the evil thereof.

5thly, Consider what is the sin that hath been formerly most affrighting to thy thoughts, and perplexing to thy conscience, when thou hast been in the immediate view of death and a tribunal. It is very likely (if thou hast not truly repented of it) that is the sin which God now intends to awake thee to see the evil of, that thou mayest sincerely mourn for, and turn from it, looking to God in Christ for pardon

and mercy.

Object. Ah (saith one) it is my lot to ly under a dumb and silent rod, I do not understand its

language, I cannot hear its voice, I cannot find out the fin that is pointed at by it; what course shall I take?

Answ.1. Be deeply humbled under this trial, and bewail thy case before the Lord; for it very much aggravates the affliction to God's people, when they know that the language of it: Hence was it that Job lamented so heavily, that his way was hid, and he knew not the reason of God's contending with him, Job iii. 23.

2. A believer's case may be sometimes so dark, that it requires a great deal of spiritual art and wisdom to enable him to hear the voice of the rod, and understand its langage. Hence it is said, "He is a man of wisdom that seeth God's name upon it," Micah vi. 9. Now, this wisdom must only come from above:

Therefore,

3. Go to God, and earnestly beg for this wisdom, that you may know his mind, and the meaning of the rod. Do as Rebekah, when the children struggled in her womb, she went to enquire of the Lord, faying, " Why " am I thus?" Gen. xxv. 22. Cry to God to give you his Spirit, to teach and enlighten you to see sin in its evil, and the particular evils you are guilty of. This was Job's course in his affliction: "Shew me (fays he) wherefore " thou contendest with me. That which I " see not, teach thou me. Make me to know " my transgression and my sin." There is no better way for a prisoner to know the reason of his confinement, than to ask the magistrate that committed him. God is a wife agent, and can give best account of his own actions.

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4. If thou canst not find out the particular sin for which God afflicts thee, then labour to repent of every known sin, and cry for pardon of every unknown and forgotten sin also. Do that out of wisdom, which Herod did out of malice, who, because he could not find out the babe Jesus, killed all the children of Bethlehem, that he might be sure to kill Jesus among them. Let us seek the utter ruin and death of all our sins, that we may be sure to destroy that sin for which God afflicts us.

5. Study to exercise a strong faith, and a humble submission, while God keeps you under the silent rod. Believe sirmly, that God is just, though you know not for what he contends. And however long he thinks sit to make you walk in the dark, resolve humbly to wait on him, and commit yourself to him, who has many times guided the blind in the way they knew not.

DIRECT. III. When any fit of sickness attacks you, think seriously upon death, and make diligent preparation for it.

I Do not mean that any man may delay the work of preparation for death, till sickness cometh: No, no; this should be the great and uptaking business of every man in the time of his health and strength. But sickness and diseases being the harbingers of death, and messengers sent from God to warn us of its coming; every man is thereby called to renew the work of preparation for death, with all earnestness

and application. God's voice, by every fit of fickness, is that in Deut. xxxii. 29. "O that "they were wife, that they understood this, "that they would consider their latter end!" God knows our folly, and readiness to forget this great work in the day of health; and therefore, in his mercy, he sends sickness and affliction, to teach us so to number our days, that we may apply our hearts to this piece of heavenly wisdom, of making preparation for death.

And here I shall drop, 1st, Some motives to press it. 2dly, Advices for the doing it aright.

I. For motives, confider these things:

1/t, Consider God's mercy and patience towards you, in giving you fo many warnings, and fo many years, to prepare for death; and in fending his meffengers and warnings fo gently and gradually, to excite you to this work; when many younger and stronger than you, are hurried into eternity, and little or no time given them to think where they are going. Have you not been spared many years, in the midst of dangers, when you have feen that bold archer Death, shooting his arrows, and killing thoufands of your neighbours and friends round about you? Sometimes the arrow hath glanced over your head, and flain some great man, your superior: Sometimes it hath alighted at your feet, and cut off a child or a fervant, your inferior: Sometimes it hath gone by on your left hand, and killed your enemy; at other times it hath passed on your right hand, and killed your near relations. So that you have feen friends and foes, superiors and inferiors, relatito tow fuac

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ons and strangers, dropping down dead round about you; and all this for a long tract of time, to give you warning to prepare for death. O let the goodness and forbearance of God, towards you, lead you to repentance, and perfuade you to slee speedily to Christ, for refuge

and protection from wrath.

if it meet you in an unprepared state, in a Christless and impenitent condition. What a fearful change will it bring upon you! A change from earth to hell, from hope to dispair, from pleasure to pain, from comforts to terrors; a change from the offers of grace, to the revelation of wrath: a change from probabilities, to utter impossibilities of salvation. Death will cut off all your hopes and expectations of mercy for ever, Job xxvii. 8. There is no coming back, to amend what hath been done amiss here; and there is no work nor device in the grave, whither you go. As the tree falls, so will it ly, through all eternity.

II. I come to give some advices, in order to the right preparation for death. 1st, Set about self-examination work. Enquire if you be in. Christ or not; if you be yet far off from God, or if you be brought near by the blood of Jesus. And see that you be impartial in this search, and willing to find out the truth of this important question. Be not foolishly tender of yourself, and apt to believe that you are safe, when it is not so; for, this way, thousands do ruin themselves. But be content to know the worst of your case, and thoroughly to under-

stand your soul's danger, that you may be moved to take the right way to escape it. Wherefore take a view of the marks of Christ-less and unconverted persons set down in God's word, and judge yourself by them: And consider also the signs of true grace there recorded, and see if they be applicable to you or not.

adly, If after enquiry, you find your state is bad; that you have been a lover of the world. more than of God; you have minded your body more than your foul; you have lived in the neglect of precious Christs allowed yourself in known fin : O then be convinced of your inabiliy to help yourfelf, and your need of Christ to help you. And labour to be deeply humbled before God, under a fenfe of your fin and folly. "Ah, how foolishly, how rebelliously, how unthankfully have I carried? I have abused God's mercies, and left undone the work for which I was made, and preferved, and enjoyed the Oh! I had all my time given me, to make preparation for endless eternity, and ! have never minded it, till now that fickness, the harbinger of death, is come upon mc.: And now, what shall I do to be faved ?" Well, then, in order to convince and humble you the more, cast back your eyes upon the fins of your nature, and of your bypast life; view them in their nature, number, aggravations and deservings. O do not so many years fins need a very deep humiliation? O do you not fland greatly in need of such a person as Christ, to be your Saviour and Ransomer from such a vast number of fins? O but their weight will press

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to yourfelf, and laid upon your back.

figdly, O finner, art thou deeply humbled, and defirous of mercy upon any terms? Believe then, that thy case is not remediless, but that there is a facrifice provided for your fins, and an able and all-fufficient Saviour in your offer. Believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and become flesh to be a furety for you; that he is both able and willing to fave to the uttermost all that come unto God by him. Though your fins, your dangers and your fears, were never so great, yet he is able and willing to fave. O fice prefently to this refuge-city, whose gates are open to receive you. Trust your foul upon Christ's facrifice and meritorious blood, for mercy and falvation. Apply humbly to him, that he may teach you the will of God, reconcile you to his Father, pardon your fins, renew you by his Spirit, and fave you from eternal wrath.

way of covenant and solemn resignation. Every man doth this sacramentally in baptism; but you must also renew it personally and explicitly, and thereby give a cordial and voluntary consent to the covenant of grace. Acquiesce chearfully in the gospel-way of salvation thro' Christ and his righteousness; and accept of God in Christ, as thy portion. Make choice of God the Father, as thy reconciled Father in Christ; and God the Son, as thy Redeemer and Saviour; and God the Holy Ghost, for thy Sanctifier, Guide and Comforter. And likewise

give up thyself, soul and body, and all thou hast, to be the Lord's; engaging, in Christ's strength, to live for God, and walk with him in newness of life. And study to do all this deliberately, unseignedly and chearfully. Though, perhaps, you have done this, hypocritically, at former times, you have profaned God's covenant, and behaved unstedsaltly and persidiously therein; yet now endeavour to be sincere with God for once.

5thly, Be living daily in the excercise of faith and repentance: renew the acts thereof frequently, in proportion to your renewed fins and guiltiness. Cleave close to glorious Christ, your High Priest and Surety, and be ever washing in his blood. As long as you are in the world, you'll need to wash your feet, John xiii. 10. Come death when it will, let it find you at the fountain, always looking to, and making use of Jesus Christ. You have great need of Christ every day of your life, more especially in sickness; but most of all at a dying hour. O what need will you have of Christ, then, as an Advovate with God, when the question is to be determined, Where your mansion is to be affigned, through all eternity, whether in heaven or hell? O then, be looking always to Christ, with the eye of faith. Live in the constant thoughts of this blessed Mediator. Let him be first in your thoughts, in the morning, and last in your thoughts, at night.

6thly, Be striving to morify every sin and lust, both outward and inward. Be dying to sin daily, that so you may not die for sin

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he e eign eternally. O that fin may be daily losing its strength, and dying in you! so that it may be certainly dead before you. Pray earnestly, that your fins may die, before you die: For, if they die not before you, but out-live the dying body, they will live eternally to sting and torment the never-dying soul.

DIRECT. IV. Be not anxious for recovery to health; but leave the issue of the present sickness, to the will and pleasure of the infinitely wise God.

D Emember, O man, thou art the clay, and God is the Potter; he is absolute Lord of by life and times, therefore learn to adore his lovereignty over thee, and all thy enjoyments. David did so, when he said, " Lord, my times " are in thy hand," Pfal. xxxi. 15. And indeed hey are only best in his hand, for he best knows low to dispose of them. The prophet saith, fa. xxx. 18. " The Lord is a God of judgment, leffed are they that wait for him." Judgment here fignifies wisdom: The Lord is a God of wisdom, and will order and time all things well; and therefore it becomes us quitely to vait for his pleasure, saying, "The will of the ord be done." It is taken notice of, as a reat sin in the Israelites, that they waited not or his counsel, but limited the holy One of frael, Psal. lxxviii. 41. What an unaccountble folly and presumption is it, for worms of he earth, to feek to stint and limit the Soveeign of heaven, to their measures! It becomes

us at all times, and especially in sickness and affliction, to have low, submissive thoughts of ourselves, and high exalted thoughts of God's fovereignity, fuch as Nebuchadnezzar had Dan. iv. 35 19 And all the inhabitants of the " earth are reputed as nothing: And he doth " according to his will in the army of heaven " and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can flay his band, or fay unto him What doft thou !! We should therefore refer all to his wife determination, and be willing to die or live, as he shall be pleafed to appoint. I remember I have read of a godly woman, who, in her sickness, being asked by one, Whether she was most desirous to die, or to live? She answered, I have no choice h that matter, but refer myfelf to the will of God. But, (faid the other) hippore Go flould refer it to you, whether to die, to live, which of them would you chuse! If God (replied the) thould refer it to me It becomes thee, O man, to be entirely religi ed to the will of thy Maker, and to stand like a centinel in thy station, ready to move, as in great General and Commander shall give orde concerning thee. It would be pleafant, at acceptable to God, to fee thee more delirous be delivered from fin, than from lickness. but fin is a far worle difeafe, than any fickne in the world! beg importunately, that the gree Physician may cure this woful foul-difease and let him do with the body what he pleaset This was David's practice in his affliction Plal.

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Psal. xxv. 18. "Look upon my affliction, and my pain; and forgive all my sin." As for his pains and afflictions, he asks no more, but that God would regard them, and look upon them, and do with them as he thought sit; but, as for his sins, no less will satisfy him than a pardon, and blotting them entirely out, so as they might be remembered no more.

DIRECT. V. Bind yourself with holy purposes and resolutions, in Christ's strength, to be more watchful against sin, more diligent in duty, and to improve the time of health better, if God shall be pleased to restore it again to you.

THEN God is visiting your iniquities with rods, and pleading a controverfy with ou for your omissions and slackness in duty, e expects that you will return from your backidings, and let about a serious reformation ind change of life. Hosea v. 15. " I will go, and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and feek my face: In their affliction they will feek me early." See hen that you open your ear to discipline: study answer God's call and expectation, and in is strength resolve to enter upon a new life. Surely now it is meet to be faid unto God, I have born chastisement. I will not offend any more. That which I see not, teach thou me: If I have done iniquity, I will do fo no more," Job xxxiv. 31, 32. Now is the season ou should say with Ephraim, Hosea xiv. 8. What have I to do any more with idols?"

Having duly examined yourselves, and searched out your sins, you ought to put a bill of devorce into each of their hands. Deliberately resolve against all your sins, whether secret, or open; and especially resolve against your darling and beloved sins, these sins of which do most easily beset you. Resolve also against all temptations to sin, and particularly against the snares of bad company, whereby you have been formerly enticed; say now with David, Psalcxix.115. "Depart from me, ye evil doers: For "I will keep the commandments of my God."

You must not only purpose to forsake all sin, but also to mind every known duty: That you will make religion your one thing needful; the pleasing of God, the chief business of your life; that you will set the Lord always before you, give him your heart in all duties, aim at nearness and communion with God in every one of them; and still press forward to the sull enjoyment of God in heaven, through

eternity.

Refolve also, thro' grace, that you will, in a special manner, mind secret duties, which the eyes of men do not observe, and these duties which conscience doth most challenge you for neglecting. And you that are heads of families, resolve to make more conscience of family-religion, of worshipping God with your families, both morning and evening; instructing your children and servants in the knowledge of Christ, and recommending religion and godliness to all round about you, whether relations or strangers.

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And if you would have your resolutions effectual, see that they be accompanied with a deep sense of your insufficiency to perform them in your own strength. Bear always in mind the corruption and deceitfulness of your own heart, and make all your resolutions in a humble dependence on the sufficiency of Jesus Christ your surety. Observe the apostle Paul's advice to his son Timothy, 2 Tim. ii. 1. " Be strong in the grace that is in Jesus Christ." All your stock, O believer, is in his hand, so that without him you can do nothing; but, through Christ strengthening you, you are able to do all things.

DIRECT.VI. Set your house in order, by making your latter-wills, and settling your domestic and secular affairs, while you have freedom and capacity for doing it.

A Fter the heart is set in order, the next work is to set your house in order, according to God's counsel to Hezekiah, Isa. xxxviii. 1. It is recorded of the patriarch Abraham, that he was careful to settle the affairs of his samily before his death, Gen. xxv. 5, 6. He disposed of his estate to Isaac, and legacies to the sons of his concubines. It is too general a fault, that men delay and put off making their wills, as they do their repentance, to the very last, and so too frequently never make them at all. Consider the evil of deferring or neglecting this necessary affair: For if you, upon whom God hath bestowed means, shall die intestate,

your estate may descend otherwise than you intended; much of it may be spent in tedious and expensive law-suits: such differences may fall out among relations, that should live in friend-ship and mutual affection, as cannot be healed; some of them may be reduced to extreme want, when a small legacy might have put them in a way of living: And many such inconveniencies may follow. Well then, if your neglect should bring on these evils, and involve posterity into endless strifes and contentions; may you not justly fear that the guilt thereof will pursue you into another world, whose wretched carelessness was the occasion of all that mischief?

Pray, what is the reason that men put off this affair? Is it not, because they do not incline to think so seriously on death, as this will occasion them to do? Doth not this smell of abominable earthly-mindedness, and speak as if a man desired all his portion in this life, and cared not for a better? and that he is so far from preparing for death, that he cannot endure to think of it? Alas that this worldly disposition should so far prevail among us! But surely there is no wise man will say, that the putting off the thoughts of death will keep death at the greater distance; or that preparing for death, and making our wills, will bring on death the sooner.

It were surely best to order our affairs timeously; yea, do it in time of health, rather than delay it unto a sick-bed, or a death-bed; for either you may be snatched off suddenly, and have no time for it; or you may be taken with such a distemper as shall seize your tongue, so

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it I you as you cannot express your mind; or seize your understanding, so as you cannot rationally dispose of your effects. And though none of these should happen, yet certainly it proves a great disturbance to a dying man, to be casting up, ordering and settling the affairs of his family, when he should be securing a heavenly mansion for his soul, and clearing up his evidences thereunto. It is great wisdom to put this affair by hand; that you may have as little to do with the world as may be, and all occasions of distraction to your immortal soul may be prevented, when it is near to its slitting into an eternal and unchangeable state.

Moreover, in fettling your fecular affairs, observe these following advices. 1. Make your wills chearfully, and freely lay down whatever you enjoy, when God calls you to it. Praise God that you had these things while you needed them; and when you have no longer use for them, leave them without repining, to these that come after you. Look not back to Egypt, when you are upon your march to Canaan.

adly, See that you deal justly, in providing for your family, paying all your just debts, and making restitution if you have wronged any. Abhor all designs of destrauding any of your lawful creditors: For, if your last ast should be unjust, you leave a blot upon your name here; and since you cannot repent of this wickedness, it being among your last deeds, you expose yourself to a fearful doom in the world whither you are going.

3dly, In settling your estates, see that God and good uses be not forgot nor left out. When you are leaving the world, and can glorify God no longer here by your words or actions, fee to honour the Lord with your substance, by leaving some part thereof to a pious and charitable use. I know, it is a work of charity to give for maintaining the bodies of the poor; and especially the poor of God's people, who belong to his family: But it is much more pious and charitable, to leave somewhat for propagating Christian knowledge in dark places, for educating poor children to read the scriptures, and instructing ignorant fouls in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. It is much to be lamented, that fo many rich men among us die, and leave nothing to fuch pious uses. The liberality of papists on their death-beds, may give a sharp challenge to many professed protestants. 0 what a shame is it to the professors of the doctrine of grace, that the false doctrines of merit and purgatory should produce so many donations and mortifications among the papifts, and the faith of Christ's most glorious gospel should not do the like among true believers! Shall the proud conceit of merit, and the imaginary fear of purgatory, prompt men to do more this way, than the certain persuasion of the love of God in Christ, and the well grounded hope of eternal life through the alone merits of Jesus Christ! O what a reproach is this to our holy religion!

and good of souls, that a great part of our testaments and latter-wills should consist of solemn

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charges, and exhortations and bleffings to our children, or those to whom we bequeath any legacy; so as they can never open our testaments, or look into them, but they might hear something that may make improssions on their souls, for their spiritual edification, and for quickening them to the diligent practice of both samily and personal godliness.

CHAP. II.

Containing some particular Directions to those who are sharply afflicted with Sickness and long Trouble.

DIRECT. I. Justify God in the greatest afflictions which befal you.

THOUGH God should condemn you, fee that you acquit him, and fay, he is righteous in all his dealings. When the church was under the heaviest distress, she finds cause to justify God, Lam. i. 18. " The Lord is righteous, for "I have rebelled against his commandment." So doth godly Nehemiah, Neh. ix. 33. " Howbeit thou art just in all that is brought upon us; for thou hast done right, but we have done wickedly." The same doth holy David acknowledge, Pfal. cxix. 75. "I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that in faithfulness thou hast afflicted me." Now, in order to bring you to this agreeable frame, and toconvince you of the equity and justice of God in his dispensations, however heavy and long your distress be, I shall lay before you the fol-

lowing confiderations:

1st, Consider the infinitely holy and righteous nature of that God who smiteth thee, Psal. cxix, 137. "Righteous art thou, O Lord, and upright are thy judgments." We presume it of a righteous man, that he will do righteous things; and shall we not much more believe so of a holy and righteous God? We cannot be infallibly certain that a righteous man will always do fo; for a righteous man may leave his righteousness, because the creature is mutable: but God is immutably righteous; fo that we may be confident of it, that the Judge of all the earth will do right, for it is impossible he can do otherwise, Zech. iii. 5. " The just Lord is in the midst thereof, he will not do iniquity." He will not, he cannot; for it is contrary to his nature.

adly, Consider that God never brings on any affliction without a cause, I Cor. xi. 30. " For this cause many are sick." He hath still just ground for the heaviest affliction, from thy fins and provocations, and may always fay to thee, as to Israel, Jer. ii. 17, 19. "Hast thou not procured this unto thyself, in that thou hast forfaken the Lord thy God, when he led thee by the way? Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backflidings shall reprove thee: know therefore, and see, that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord." There is still ground enough for af-Miction to be found in the best of God's people; and therefore it is faid, Lam. iii. 33. " For he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the child-

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ren of men." No; it is our fins that oblige him to it. As Christ whipped the sellers of oxen and sheep out of the temple with a whip as is generally thought) made of their own cords: fo God never fcourgeth us but with a whip made of our own fins, Prov. v. 22. " His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his fins." If we consider the mighty God as a Lord dispensing grace, then we find he acts fovereignly, and according to his will and plea-fure, Matth. xi. 26. " Even so, Father, for so it feemeth good in thy fight." But, if we confider him as a Judge dispenting judgments, he never doth it without a foregoing cause on the creature's part. God's treasure of mercy is always full and ready to be let out to them that feek it; but his treasure of wrath is empty till men fill it up by their fins, Rom. ii. 16. "Thou treasurest up to thyself wrath against the day of wrath." We do always provide fewel for God's wrath before it kindle and break out upon us.

adly, Consider further this instance of God's equity, that when there is a cause given, God doth not presently take it, but continues to threaten oft, and warn long, before he execute the sentence of his word. He sends lesser strokes as warnings of greater, if we repent not; and he repeats his warnings many times, both by his word and providence, before he smite. Yea, even when repeated warnings are slighted, he delays a long time, and waits to be gracious, lsa. xxx. 18. And when man's obstinacy and incorrigibleness arrive to such a height, that he

can spare no longer; yet, how loth is he to give them up to severe judgments! Hos. xi. 8. "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee, Israel? How shall I make thee as Admah? How shall I set thee as Zeboim? Mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together." When the Lord hath sinners in his arms, ready to give them up to severe judgments, yet he makes a stand, and would fain be prevented before he proceed to his strange work; for so he calls his acts of judgment, Isa. xxviii. 21. Acts of mercy are co-natural, most agreeable and pleasant to God, Micah vii. 18. "He delighteth in mercy: but judgment is his strange act, and his strange work.

4thly, Consider, that when at last he sends strokes on us, they are always short of the cause; he exacts not the whole debt that finners owe to his justice, as Ezra doth acknowledge, Ezra ix. 13. "Thou haft punished us less than our iniquities deserve." The stroke he there is speaking of, was a most heavy judgment; fearful ruin and desolation came upon Jerusalem, and the whole land of Judah; the city and temple were burnt to ashes, the people carried captives to a strange land, and treated as bond flaves among the heathen: Yet, faith the holy man, "Thou hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve." q. d. It is true, we have been carried to Babylon, but in justice we might have been fent to hell: our houses were burnt, but our bodies might have been burnt too: We have been drinking water, but we might have been driuking blood; We have had grievous

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burdens on earth, but we might have been groaning in hell: We were banished from the temple, but we might have been eternally banished from God's presence." We think it a great favour among men, when any punishment is mitigated, when the sentence of death is changed into banishment, or when banishment is turned into a fine; or a great fine is made smaller: And will you think that God deals severely or rigorously with you, when he lays you on a sick-bed, when he might justly have laid you in hell, and poured out all his wrath upon you there? You but taste of the brim of the cup, when God might cause you drink of the bottom and dregs thereof.

Have you not cause then to acknowledge God's justice, nay, even his mercy too, in his dealings with you, however rough they seem to be? May you not, with good reason say, any thing less than hell is a mercy to such an ill-deserving creature as I am? If even a hard-hearted Pharaoh, under distress, came the length to own the justice of God, Exod. ix. 27. "I have sinned; the Lord is righteous:" shall any professed Christian fall short of that obstinate Egyptian?

DIRECT.II. Labour still to be sensible of God's hand under heavy affliction, and beware of stupidity and unconcernedness under it.

IT is a fin to faint under heavy affliction, but it is a duty to feel it, Heb. xii. 5. " My fon, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor

faint when thou art rebuked of him." The apostle there doth caution against two extremes which every Christian under the rod should be careful to avoid, 1. Despising or making light 2. Sinking or desponding upon of affliction. We are in great hazard of running into the one or the other. As to the first, We may be faid to despife the chastening of the Lord when we do not observe God's hand in our affliction, so as to reform the things whereby he was displeased: Or when we resolve to abide the trial, by the strength of our own resolutions and stout-heartedness, without looking to God for supporting grace: Or when we turn stupid and infenfible under the heavy and long continued rod. This despising and slighting of the rod, is not patience, but stupidity; it is not Christian magnanimity, but a stoical temper of mind, most finful and provoking to God. fee how angry God is with finners, when his strokes are not felt, Isa. xli. 25. " He hath poured upon him the fury of his anger; and it hath fet him on fire round about, yet he knew not; and it hath burned him, yet he laid it not to heart." Jer. v. 3. " Thou haft firicken them, but they have not grieved: thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction: they have made their faces harder than a rock, they have refused to return." There is little hope of a scholar minding his lesson, that is regardless of whipping. It is a dreadful sign to be like Pharaoh, fleeping in our fins, when God is thundering in his wrath. He that will fleep when his house is on fire, or lie still in bed,

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as if he was not concerned, may assuredly expect to be consumed in its stames. As David could not bear it, when the messengers, he sent to the Ammonites out of good will, were affronted and despised; so neither will God endure it, when the messengers he sends to sinners are slighted; for he that slights a messenger, affronts his master. These who make light of affliction, make light of God that sends it, and make light of sin that procures it.

Quest. But, when is it that people are suitably concerned under a heavy rod? Answ. When they see God's hand, hear God's voice, answer his intent, are curious to know his mind, desirous to do these things he requires, and reform

these things he is displeased with.

Remember, every affliction is a messenger from God, and deferves a hearing from you. It comes to thee with such a message as Ehud did to Eglon, Judges iii. 20. " I have an errand from God to thee, O king:" I have a message from God to thee, O Christian, O sinner. Well, lend an ear. and hearken with reverence and attention to this errand; fay, "Speak, Lord, for thy fervant heareth, what wouldst thou have me to do?" Believe it, that God speaks as really to you by his rod, as by his word; therefore he fays, "Hear ye the rod." God spake as truly by his ten plagues to Egypt, as he did by his ten precepts to Israel. And if the calm voice of the word were more regarded, we should hear less of the rough voice of the rod. As Gideon took briers and thorns of the wilderness, and with them taught the men of Succoth, who would

not be taught by fairer means, Judges viii. 16. fo God takes the sharp prickles of fore afflictions, to teach you his statutes, when you will not be taught by softer methods. Beware then of grieving God's Spirit, by turning stupid and insensible under sharp or long continued trials: But, the more pains God is at with you by his rod, hearken the more carefully to his voice; and labour to make the greater proficiency in the school of affliction, where he thinks sit to continue you; that so you may inherit that blessing, Psal. xciv. 12. "Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law."

DIRECT. III. Beware of misconstructing God's dealings towards you, and of charging him foolishly.

WE are apt to believe Satan's suggestions under heavy trials, and to entertain wrong thoughts of God and his dispensations. Now, these you ought to guard against: as, for instance, ift, Beware of harbouring atheistical thoughts, as if there were no providence, no wife governor of this lower world, no diffinction betwixt the good and bad; and that it is to no purpose to be religious, like these mentioned in Maltiii. 14. "Ye have said, it is vain to serve God: and what profit is it, that we have kept his ordinances, and walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts!" Yea, even the Psalmist, when he begins to compare his own sharp trials with the wicked's ease and prosperity, is tempted to think all religion in vain, and fay, Pfal. lxxiii.

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Judg us, v 13, 14. "Verily I have cleanfed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency. For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning." But these are nothing but the hellish suggestions of Satan, that irreconcileable enemy of God, and precious souls, against which we should closely stop our ears.

adly, Beware of charging God in your hearts with rigour or injustice in his dealing, like these, Ezek. xviii. 25. Yet ye Jay, the way of the Lord is not equal. How highly unjust and injurious, are such thoughts to him. who is the Judge of

all the earth, and cannot do but right!

3dly, Beware of thinking that heavy afflictions do always speak wrath in God against thee: No, sometimes they speak forth love, and God may be carrying on a love-design thereby to thy soul, viz. to subdue thy strong lusts, and draw thee nearer unto himself. As for these who think that the smarting rod and divine love cannot dwell together, let them read that passage, Heb. xii. 5, 6. "And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him. For whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth; and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth."

4thly, Beware of desponding and distrustful thoughts of God, under sharp afflictions. Some are ready to raze the foundation, quit their interest in God, and the promises, and cast away their hope and confidence, saying with Gideon, Judges vi. 13. Oh my lord, if the Lord be with us, why then is all this evil befallen us? So David

was ready to drw a hasty conclusion, Psal. xxxi, 22. I faid in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes. But this was the effect of unbelief; for he that believeth, will not make haste.

DIRECT.IV. Under fore trouble and distress, labour to exercise a strong and lively faith.

holy man Job, under his fingular trials, Job xiii. 15. Though he flay me, yet will I trust in him. q. d. Let my strokes be never so fore and heavy, yet I will not let go my grips of his word and promises; I will not raze these foundations of my hope. It was the way the Psalmist kept himself from sinking under his heavy burdens, Psal. xxviii. 13. I had fainted, unless I had be lieved to see the goodness of the Lord, in the land of the living. Consider but a little, the noble influence that faith hath to strengthen and support the soul under sore trials.

of salvation in and through Jesus Christ, and so secures the soul's main interest through eternity; which may make the soul easy in every lot.

adly, Faith views God in Christ, at the helm in the greatest storm, and so it endures, as seeing him who is invisible, Heb. xi. 27.

3dly, Faith casts the soul's anchor upon the Rock of Ages, and stays itself on God, and the faithful promises; whereby the soul is eased and disburdened of its fears and melanchely apprehensions, Psal. iv. 22. Isa. 1. 10.

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ary supplies of grace from heaven, when the former supply is exhausted and spent; whereof David had the sweet experience, Psal. xxvii.13. As God doth plant and actuate grace in the soul, so he is pleased to come in with seasonable supplies and reinforcements to the weak and decayed graces of his people, answerable to their present exigencies and pressures. And thus he doth from time to time seed the believer's lamp with fresh oil, give in more saith, more love, more hope, and more desires; and thereby he gives power to the faint, and strengthens the things which remain, when ready to die.

5thly, Faith keeps the foul from finking under heavy trials, by bringing in former experiences of the power, mercy and faithfulness of God to the afflicted foul: Hereby was the Pfalmist supported in distress, Psal. xiii. 6. Psal. lxxxvii. 4. 0, faith faith, remember what God hath done both for thy outward and inward man; he hath not only delivered thy body when in trouble, but he hath done great things for thy foul; he hath brought thee out of a state of black nature, entered into a covenant-relation with thee, and made his goodness pass before thee; he hath helped thee to pray, and many times hath heard thy prayers and thy tears. / Hath he not formerly brought thee out of the horrible pit, and out of the miry clay, and put a new fong in thy mouth, and made thee to resolve never to give way to fuch unbelieving doubts and fears again? And how unbecoming is it for thee now to fink in trouble? F 2

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othly, Faith supports the soul, by giving it a pleasant view and prospect of a happy outgate from all trouble; when it shall be admitted to see and dwell with Christ hereaster. Thus was Job supported in his greatest distress, Job xix. 25, 26, 27. "For I know that my Redeemer liveth; and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth.—Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold," &c. A believing view of the soul's meeting with its Redeemer, and receiving a crown of glory from him at last, is an excellent support to a Christian under the heaviest affliction; and so was it to Paul, 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.

7thly, Faith gives great support, by the encouraging representations it makes of Christ, and of his present concern for the believer while under affliction. As for instance, 1st, Faith represents Christ to a believer under trials, as sympathizing with him under his distress, feeling his pain, hearing his groans, bearing his burdens, and ready to relieve him in his own appointed time, which it well becometh him

to wait for.

adly, Faith represents Christ as putting in his almighty arm under the believer's head, and conveying invisible strength to support and hold him up under his greatest pressures.

afflicted believer's cause with God, and answering all the charges of the law, the challenges of conscience, and accusations of Satan against him.

4thly, Faith represents Christ as standing by

the furnace as a refiner where his gold is melting; carefully overfeeing the trials of his people, that they may work for their good; and ready to bring them out thereof, when they are fufficiently purified from their drofs.

5thly, Faith represents Christ as smiling on his people under the cross, whispering peace into their ear, and saying, Well done, good and

faithful servant.

DIRECT.V. Labour to bear with patience whatever load of trouble the Lord appoints for you.

TTE will perhaps observe some who are V strangers to religion contentedly enduring very painful evils; and this they may do by virtue of a natural hardiness and resolution which some are endowed with, or upon the account of arguments furnished by human prudence: This is only patience as a moral virtue, which fome attain to. But it is patience as a spiritual grace, or a fruit of the Spirit, which we must aim at under our trials; that we may bear them contentedly from divine principles, to divine ends. Now this grace of patience we must carnestly beg from God under heavy afflictions, for it is only he that must work it in us; and therefore he is called the God of patience, Rom. xv. 5. And in order to your attaining of this grace, I shall lay before you the following confiderations, which may be useful, through the Lord's bleffing, for that end.

1st, Consider the patience of our Lord Jesus Christ under sufferings inexpressibly greater than

yours. When it pleased the Lord to bruise him, and put him to grief; how patiently did he bear all? according to that remarkable word, Isa. liii. 7. "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth." Now, Christ suffered as an example of patience, though it was not his chief end; and surely all the members of the body should study to imitate the head in patience. Did your blessed Saviour patiently endure such agonies and pressures of wrath for you; and, will you decline to undergo some short pains or sickness in obedience to his commands?

2dly, Consider God's sovereignty over you. He is the great Potter, and you are his clay: and why may he not do with you as he pleafeth? If your children offend you, you scourge them, and perhaps do it sometimes without reason; yet how ill do you take it, when they refuse to fubmit? How will you drive and fpur your horses under you, and may be sometimes unreafonably? Yet they bear all quietly, and make no resistance. Shall they take blows from their master; and will not you from your Maker, that has far more power over you? If any challenge you for cruelty to your children or beafts, you take it not well, because you think you may do what you will with your own, and no man hath a right to quarrel you: But, hath not God a greater property in you, than you in your children or cattle? And, will you not patiently submit to your wife and absolute Sovereign?

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adly, Consider thy sin as the meritorious cause of all thy afflictions, however heavy they be. If thou hast right thoughts of thy fins, and the aggravations thereof, thy mind may be composed to a patient submission to God's hand: If sin be heavy on thee, all thy afflictions will be light. Luther gives this as a reason why he slighted the rage of the pope and emperor, and all his outward troubles: They are all little to me, because sin is so weighty on me. Hence it was that Paul complained not at all of his fufferings. for as great as they were; but he cried out much of his fins, Rom. vii. 24. O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death! Sense of fin doth swallow up the fense of affliction, as the ocean doth little brooks. For, with whom shouldst thou quarrel, but thyfelf, when thou bringest troubles on thyself? This confideration should bring thee to resolve and fay with the prophet, Micah vii. 9. I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him.

are, you are called to bear, yet they fall infinitely short of what you have justly deserved at
God's hands. It is of his infinite mercy that
death and everlasting destruction have not been
your portion long since; and that you are not
now roaring under the extremity of his indignation in the bottomless pit, together with the
devil and his angels. And consequently, whatsoever falls short of this, is truly a great mercy;
and is so far from being ground of quarrelling,
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just cause to admire God's clemency in dealing more favourably with him than he hath deserved.

5thly, Compare thy case with others that have been, or presently are in distress. Do not fav there is none so hardly dealt with as thou art: for thou knowest not the affliction of others. Consider duly the trials of that eminent faint Tob, in all the circumstances thereof, and see if you can fay that your forrow is near fo great as his forrow was. Again, compare your case with that of the damped in hell, who lie and fry in endless and easeless flames, so that they have no rest day nor night, but the smoke of their torment ascends for ever: And think what a bleffing it is, that you are yet in a state of falvation, and not delivered over to these everlasting burnings, which were the due demerits of your fins, and to which you might long ago have been justly condemned, had it not been for the patience and long-suffering of Almighty God, who waiteth to be gracious to guilty finners. When you consider these things, instead of being diffatisfied with the divine dispensations, you have cause to bless God, that matters are not worse with you; and that you are kept out of hell to this day, where thousands, no more guilty than you, are presently roaring in endless desperation.

Unto these considerations I shall subjoin some few helps or advices, in order to the attaining of patience under sore troubles. r. Labour to get pardon of sin and peace with God, secured to thy soul, and this will enable you to bear the heaviest cross with patience. Hence it was that Luther cried, "Smite Lord, as thou wilt, I take all in good part, seeing my sins are pardoned: O! pardon of sin is the crowning blessing, therefore will I bear any thing, I will swallow up quarrelling into admiring; I will welcome the pruning knife, seeing there is no fear of the bloody ax to fell me down."

2. Labour to see God's hand in thy affliction. Do not, like the dog, snarl at the stone, but look up to the hand that throws it. And surely a view of the hand of a holy God, may serve to calm all the boisterous waves of thy corruption; so did it with David, Psal. xxxix 9. I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it. When he looked to the instruments and second causes of his afflictions, his heart waxed hot, and the fire of his inward passion began to burn and break out; but when he once espied God's hand and seal to the warrant for his correction, he became silent, and patiently submitted to the divine will.

3. Get a humble and self-denied frame of spirit, that you may have low thoughts of your-selves, and of all your attainments whatsomever. A proud man cannot think of submitting to the divine will, but will break before he bow. Hence we see a vast difference betwixt a proud Pharaoh, and an humble Eli, under the rod: The one says, Who is the Lord, that I should obey him? But the other saith, It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good.

4. Get love to Jesus Christ. Love is an cn-during principle, I Cor xiii 7. it endureth all

things. It makes the foul, like the kindly child, draw nearer to Christ, the more it is beaten.

5. Interpret God's ways and dealings with you always in the best sense. And, lastly, Be earnest in prayer, that God may conquer your rebellious will, and subdue those mutinous risings of heart within you against himself.

DIRECT. VI. Beware of envying wicked men, when you see them in health and prosperity.

HE Pfalmist, when he was chastened every L morning and in great adversity, was liable to this evil, Pfal. lxxiii. 3. I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. Corrupt nature doth strongly incline us to this finful disposition, especially in the day of sore affliction; for the spirit that dwelleth in us, lusteth to envy, James iv. 5. But, did we rightly consider the state of wicked men, we would see greater ground to pity than envy them in the most prosperous condition: Why? The prosperity of the fools shall destroy them, Prov.i. 32. It makes them forget God, and turn hardened and secure in fin, which hastens their ruin. Who would envy a malefactor's going up a high ladder, and being mounted above the rest of the people, when it is only for a little, and in order to his being turned over and hanged? This is just the case of wicked men, who are mounted up high in prosperity; for it is so, only that they may be cast down deeper into destruction. Observe that word, Psal. xxxvii. 1, 2. " Fret not thyself because of evil-doers, wt is wo

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fu W neither be thou envious against those that work iniquity: For they shall soon be cut down like grais," &c. And that word, Psalm xcii. 7. "When the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish, it is that they shall be destroyed for ever." It would be a brutish thing to envy an ox his high and sweet pasture, when he is only thereby fitted to the day of flaughter. Who would have envied the beafts of old, the garland and ribbons with which the heathen adorned them when they went to be facrificed? These external ornaments of health, wealth, pleasures and preferments, wherewith wicked men are endowed, cannot make their state happy, nor change their natures to the better. Whatever appearance thefe things make in the eyes of the world, they are but like a noisome dunghill covered with fcarlet, as vile and loathsome in God's fight as ever. How quickly is the beauty of earthly things blasted? The triumphing of the wicked is short, Job xx. 5. They live in pleasures on the earth, for a while; but God sets them in flippery places, from whence they foon slide into perpetual pain and anguish. They have a short time of mirth, but they shall have an eternity of mourning. The longer their prosperity is, their sins are the greater, and their sufferings will be more grievous. But, O believer, it is in mercy to thee, that God doth hedge up thy way with thorns, that thou mayest not find thy paths: whilft he turns the wicked loofe, and suffers them to stray and wander whither they will, to their eternal ruin. God takes this

method with thee, to make you meet for an inheritance, and prepare you for a crown of glory; but he takes a contrary way with the wicked, to fit them for destruction: Therefore you ought not to be fretful under his hand, but thankful. We read of queen Elizabeth, when the was in prison, how the envied the poor milkmaid the faw paffing by, and would have thought herself happy to have been in her condition: but had that afflicted princess known the glorious reign of forty-four years she was soon to enter upon, she would not have repined at the happiness of so mean a person. But, O afflicted believer, it is not a glorious reign for a fet number of years, that is provided for thee; it is even a reign with glorious Christ thy Redeemer for ever and ever: And, hast thou any ground to be discontented or envious?

DIRECT. VII. Guard against repining complaints and discontented murmurings against the providence of God, under heavy sickness and affliction.

WE see, the murmurers and complainers are classed with these that walk after their own lusts, Jude ver. 16. I know, the people of God are liable to murmuring and impatience also under affliction; but there is a great difference betwixt them and the wicked. I'll have occasion to speak of believers murmurings afterwards, when I come to speak of their case in particular; but here I shall handle the sin of murmuring in general, and as it appears mainly in the unregenerate, under heavy affliction.

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This sin of murmuring is the froth of impatience, and scum of discontent; it is first cherished by repining thoughts, and then vented by unsuitable complaints and expostulations, taxing the administration of providence, as if God dealt too hardly with us. Our very thoughts are audible with God, yea, as loud in his ears, as words are in ours; but it is yet worse, when repining thoughts are not crushed, but suffered to break out into words tending to the dishonour of God.

Quest. But, is it altogether unlawful to complain of affliction, whatever be our case?

Answ. Humble complaints are not murmurings, nor finful in themselves; otherwise there would be no room for prayer, and for spreading out our distressed case before the Lord. find God's children making complaints in affliction; but then they do not complain of God, but to God, with a humble enquiry into the cause and meaning of his dispensations, and laying all the blame upon themselves, as did Job, chap. x. 1, 2. " I will leave my complaint upon myself; I will speak in the bitterness of my soul, I will fay unto God, do not condemn me: shew me wherefore thou contendest with me." Thus the bleffed Son of God himself did, in his distress, when he cried, My God, my God, why hast thou for saken me? But there we may observe, he complains to God, not of God; he hath not a hard word or thought of God, but expresseth a holy confidence in God, My God, my God; he hath two words of faith for one word of fear, he humbly enquires into the

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cause of the dispensation, and desire to bring up his will to God, not that God should bring down his will to him: If it be possible, fays he, let this cup pass; however, glorify thy name, provide for thy own glory, and do with me what thou pleasest. In this matter our Lord doth fet himself as an example of patience to us, teaching us to beware of impatient murmuring and quarrelling with God's providence in our affliction; which many times we are guilty of, either when we harbour harsh thoughts of God's dealings, or break forth into rash and unadvised speeches; when we charge God foolishly, and complain either of too much severity, as Ezek. xviii. 2, 25. or too long delay, as Isa. xlix. 14. or when our complaints are mixed with unbelief and distrust, as Psal. lxxviii. 19. or when we complain more of our punishment than we do of our fin, and nothing will fatisfy us but deliverance from trouble.

Now, to deter you from these murmurings and complaints in trouble, I shall lay before you the following considerations: 1st, They who deserve worst do commonly complain and murmur most, and are most ready to think they are hardly dealt with. The unthankful Israelites were still murmuring. Ambitious Absalom was discontented. Bloody Haman, in midst of all his greatness, cries out, What doth all this avail me? But humble Jacob saith, he was not worthy of the least of all the mercies and truth which God had shewed him. And holy Job blesses God, and patiently submits, when he took from

him, as well as when he gave him.

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but Arik adly, Murmuring is a fin that God takes special notice of, and looks on as an injury and affront done immediately against himself, Numb. xiv. 27. "I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel, which they murmur against me." He that gives ear to the groans of his own Spirit, doth also hear the grumblings of thine, and will reckon with thee for them.

diffres. I may say of sinful complaining, (as Christ of sinful care) Which of you, by complaining, can add one cubit to his stature? What ease or relief can you get by contending with God? Nay, instead of easing you of your burden, it will make it the heavier; as a child, the more he struggles with his parents, he is the more beaten. The Israelites were once within eleven days journey of Canaan; but by their murmurings they provoked God to lead them forty years march in the wilderness before they could reach it.

4thly, Whatever be your distress, there is no just ground for complaints, whilst thou hast thy life for a prey. Remember that word of the afflicted church, Lam. iii. 39. "Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins!" A man living, a man upon the earth, a man out of hell hath no cause to complain, whatever be his affliction. For, let him compare his sin and punishment together, he will find there is no proportion: sin is a transgression against the infinite God; punishment is but an affliction upon the finite creature: sin strikes at the very being of God; but punish-

ment only at the comfort of the creature. So that whatever your punishment be, you have more cause to give thanks than to complain; and to say with Ezra, Thou hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve. It might have been a thousand times worse, if strict justice had been the rule: It is of the Lord's mercies we are not consumed.

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5thly, When you murmur under fickness, you quarrel with the meffenger of that fovereign God, who gave you your lives, and can take them again when he thinks fit; and we know ineffengers ought not to be maltreated or abufed, whatever be their commission, and far less when they are fent upon a good defign. Now, if you consider the design of this messenger and his errand to you, instead of fretting and quarrelling at his coming, you ought rather to bless God that fends fuch a fuitable harbinger and forerunner to tell you that death is approaching, and that he vouchfafes to take so much pains on you, to wean you from the world, and make you willing to be gone, by long continued trouble; when he might have seized you in a violent manner, and driven you away by main force, without using any means to obtain your confent. Have not many, who were most unwilling to die, at the beginning of a fickness, been brought, by the increase and continuance of it, to be well fatisfied to leave the world, and long to be with Christ? And was not this for their advantage?

of impatient murmurings, complaints and quarrellings under affliction. distrust of God, Psal. cvi. 24 25. They believed not his word, but murmured in their tents. They could not believe that the wilderness was the way to Canaan, that God would provide and furnish a table for them there, and relieve them in all their straits. So it is with us introuble, we quarrel with God's providence, because we do not believe his promises; we do not believe that this can be consistent with love, or can work for good in the end.

2. It hath in it unthankfulness. While we complain of one affliction, we overlook a thousand mercies. The Ifraelites murmured fo for what they had not, that they unthankfully forgot all they had. Whereas a thankful person is so far from fretting that God doth not give him every thing, that he wonders that God should give him any thing. I am lefs than the least of all thy mercies, said Jacob. We are perplexed, said Paul, but not in despair : we have God to go to, which is matter of praise. But the murmurer unthankfully overlooks all his present, and forgets all his former mercies; and gives not God thanks for any thing. Because God removes his comforts, his health, firength. and eafe for a time; all the years he formerly enjoyed them, though most undescreedly, are quite buried in oblivion.

3. It implies much pride and felf-conceit. He that complains of God's dealings, secretly applauds his own deservings. Only by pride comes contention. When men have a conceit of themselves, they pick quarrels with God's

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providence, being apt to think they deferve better treatment at his hands: Whereas the humble foul is sensible he deserves nothing but wrath, and therefore lays his hand on his mouth when the Lord afflicts him.

4. It involves men into rebellion against God. When God strikes men for sin, murmurs sty in his face, and kick against his strokes, like bullocks unaccustomed to the yoke. They in some respect resemble that desperate apostate Julian, of whom it is written, that he shot up his darts against heaven, when he was in distress. They fulfil that word, Prov. xix. 3. The foolishness of man perverteth his way, and his heart fretteth against the Lord. The repining heart boils with rage against God and his dispensations, like these wicked Jews when hungry and hardly bestead, Isa. viii. 21. They shall fret themselves, and curse their king and their God, and look upward.

5. It imports much impenitency and unhumbledness for sin; and that we have seen little of the intrinsic evil of sin; and of our ill-deservings for it. Can we truly believe that our sins deserve hell-fire, and yet impatiently repine at sickness and lesser strokes upon our bodies?

6. It includes much atheism and blasphemy against God, and his infinite persections in several respects:

(1.) By our impatient murmurings, we either virtually deny that things here below are governed by God's providence; or else,

(2.) We tax his providence with unrighteousness in the managements thereof; as if God did withhold from us what is due, or inflict on us what we have not deserved. Oh what atheism is this! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? May he not, upon the justest ground, answer every murmur, as Matth. xx. 13. Friend, I do thee no wrong?

(3.) We in effect grasp at the sovereignty, and usurp the throne of the most high God, and would have the disposal of things in our hands; yea, we presume to summon God to our bar to give account of his administrations, when we take upon us to quarrel any of his dispensations. Alas, we little remembered the wo that is pronounced against so doing, Isa. xlv. 9. "Wo unto him that striveth with his Maker; shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou? or thy work, He hath no hands?"

(4.) We on the matter take fin's part against God; we either justify it, or extenuate its evil, and alledge, by our murmurings, that God is unrighteous to punish such small sins with such

heavy afflictions.

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(5.) We virtually question God's power to reach us a greater blow, when we enter the lists with God, and contend with our Maker; is it not in effect to say, we know how to reduce him to our terms, or make our party good against him.

(6) We disparage his wisdom, and take upon us to be his counsellors, as if we could instruct him better in the management of affairs, and teach him what is fit to be done with his creatures. Hear what the Lord saith, Jobxi.2. "Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty,

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instruct him? He that reproveth God, let him answer it." Murmuring is a reproving of God, and a charging him with ill conduct, saying, in effect, with Absalom, "There is none that takes care to order mens affairs: O that I were king of the world! then should things be better ordered than they now are." So blasphemous is the language of our impatient murmurings.—Let us therefore be ashamed of them, and abhor ourselves in dust and ashes for our foolishness in censuring the actions of the only wise God.—Shall a poor ignorant passenger, that understands not the use of the compass, be angry that the skilful pilot will not steer the vessel according to his pleasure?

(7.) We hereby flight and undervalue the riches of divine goodness, of which we have formerly shared, and do still partake: Like foolish and pettish children, if they cannot have their will, or get some things they want, do presently throw away the things which they have, saying with unthankful Haman, All this

availeth me nothing.

Lastly, I might add, This fin hath some resemblance to hell itself; for there the damned do continually vex and torment themselves with their fretting and impatient thoughts, which cause them to break out in fearful rage and blasphemy against God.

Quest. But how shall we prevent such discontented murmurings? for sometimes trouble

is so great, we cannot bear it patiently.

Answ. God hath given you reason, to bear rule over passion, and furnished you with strong

arguments to prevail against discontents. Why then should you be so brutish as to dethrone reason, and suffer sense and passion to govern in you? Are you not Christians, and sworn to live according to the rules of that excellent religion? Why then do you act so contrary to your profession and engagements?

Besides what I have already said, I shall add some few remedies more for the cure of this

murmuring diftemper.

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ist, Look on thy murmurings as worse than all thy pains and troubles whatsoever; those are but afflictions from God, but these are sins

grievous and provoking unto God.

adly, Remember the judgments which murmuring hath brought down from heaven upon finners. Miriam was smitten with leprosy for it; Dathan and Abiram were swallowed up alive: fiery serpents, plagues, and exclusion from Canaan, were Israel's judgments for this sin, 1 Cor. x. 10. "Neither murmur ye, as some of them murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer." The arrows which murmurers shoot against heaven, do soon return upon their own heads.

3dly, Whatever thy sufferings are for the present, yet still believe thy case might be worse. The troubles that light upon the body are nothing so terrible as these that light on the soul, Prov. xviii. 14. A wounded spirit who can bear? They are nothing to what thy innocent Saviour suffered upon the cross, yea nothing to what some martyrs have endured for the truths of the gospel.

a deep sense of ill-deservings for sin. O! should a fire-brand of hell murmur for temporal affictions?

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5thly, Be still examining thyself, rather than censuring God. Doth God seem to neglect thee, say alas, it is most just! Have not I neglected him, and given a deaf ear to his calls many

a day?

6thly, Bear in mind that these troubles will not last, there is a great change near; either they will issue in life or death. If life, you will be ashamed you had no more patience when fick; if death, then, if you belong to Christ, it will give a finishing stroke to all troubles and complaints, and heaven will make amends for all. But if you be not in Christ, whatever your afflictions be now, troubles a thousand times worse are abiding you in another world: death will turn thy croffes into pure unmixed curses; and then, how gladly wouldest thou return to thy former afflicted state, and purchase it at any rate, were there any possibility of such a return? You now fly out in a passion, and say, you are not able to bear what you complain of: But consider, if you will not obediently bear God's rods now, you will then bear more, whether you will or not; and God will make you able to bear more, when there will never be any hopes of relief.

7thly, Study to give vent to thy forrows in a way of prayer and praise. An oven stopped is the more hot within; but the breath of prayer or praise gives ease. If we did complain more

to God, we should complain less of God. What a mercy is it, that you have still God to go to improve the privilege, confess unworthiness, and beg the grace of patience and submission out of Christ's full treasures. Be also praising God for mercies received; and however bad thy case is, bless God it is not in hell, you are in the land of hope.

C H A P. III.

Containing special Directions to the Children of God, when under Sickness or any other Affliction.

DIRECT. I. Let believers especially guard against fainting or desponding under God's afflicting hand.

THIS is an exhortation which God in a peculiar manner directs unto his children, Heb. xii 5. My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him. There are two extremes mentioned, despising and fainting; I spoke of the first before, in Chap. II. Direct. II. It is a duty to feel our affliction, but a fin to faint under it. God's people may be said to faint under their trials, when they fink, or despond, or give way to fretting or repining under them. In the preceding Direction, I spoke of the evil of murmuring in general; here I shall speak of believers faintings in particular.

1. I shall enquire whence their fainting under

affliction doth proceed.

2. Bring some arguments and helps against this evil.

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I. As to the first, Whence these faintings in believers do proceed. 1/t, They proceed from the grievousness of their affliction, and the heaviness of their burden, which is ready to amaze and stagger their thoughts, and sink their spirits with fear and despondency. Hence did the Psalmist complain, Psalm Ix. 3. "Thou hast shewed thy people hard things: thou hast made us to drink the wine of astonishment." And Psalm Ixix. 2. "I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing; I am come into deep

waters, where the floods overflow me."

adly, From the smallness of their spiritual strength, and particularly the weakness of their faith, Prov. xxiv. 10. If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small. Whence was it that Peter fainted and began to sink in the waters, but from the weakness of his faith, Matth. xiv. 30, 31. We know not our strength till it be tried. Sometimes we have such a conceit of it, that we think, like Peter, we can walk upon a sea of trouble: but in a little, behold, some surprising blast assaults our confidence: and then we faint, or cry out with him, Help, Lord, or elfe we perish. Peter reckoned only upon the sea, but he did not think of the boisterous wind; and he looked to dangers, more than to the power that was to carry him through them.

3dly, From their impatience of delay, when deliverance is long a-coming, it is not easy to wait God's leisure, and to keep the heart from

desperate conclusions, Psalm xxxi. 22. "I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes."

4thly, From the power of Satan's temptations, and furious affaults. When Satan is fet loofe in time of affliction to throw in his fiery darts, the believer is ready to faint, and fay, as Psal. lxxvii. 8. "Is his mercy clean gone for ever:" &c.

body of death and an ill heart. These in time of affliction do add affliction to the afflicted.

When God hides his face from the believer in affliction, his foul faints under it, as in Isa. xliv. 14. "Zion hath said, the Lord hath for-

faken me, my God hath forgotten me."

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7thly, From the conscience of their guilt, and ill deservings before God, upon the account of old sins, abuse of mercies, and untender walking before God. Affliction doth revive old sins, as with Job, Job xiii. 26. "Thou writest bitter things against me, and makest me to possess the sins of my youth." His old sins, and guilt of his youthful follies, now revived upon him, and sat closs to his conscience; which occasioned his fainting under his burden.

Lastly, Great afflictions do frequently cloud the believer's graces and evidences for heaven, and discover their corruptions; whereby they are made to sink under their trial. They see more unbelief, impatience, distrust and enmity to God in them, than they saw before: Whereby they are sometimes tempted to raze the soundation, and say all their former attainments

were but delusions, and their professions but hypocrify. These things make afflictions sometimes very heavy and sinking to the people o God.

II. In the next place, for preventing and helping this evil of fainting under affliction;

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let believers confider,

1st, These heavy trials are all needful for you. Deep waters are not more needful to carry a ship into the haven, than great afflictions are to carry the vessels of our souls into the port of blifs. Strong wind and thunder are frightful, but they are necessary to purge the air. One of the sharpest calamities that ever befel Israel, was the Babylonish captivity, yet even this was in mercy to them; for the Lord faith, Ier. xxiv. 5. " I have fent them out of this place into the land of the Chaldeans for their good." Strange! Of freemen to be made prisoners, and that in a strange land among the heathen; to be removed far from their own houses, vineyards, friends, nay, and from the temple of God and his ordinances; and yet all this for their good! why? they were hereby effectually weaned and broke of from their darling fin of idolatry.

heavy it be, will soon have an end; Isa. lvii 16. "For I will not contend for ever, neither will be alwayes wroth; for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made." The goldsmith will not let his gold lie any longer in the surnace than it is purified. The wicked have a sea of wrath to drink; but, 0

drooping believer, take comfort; you have but a cup of affliction, which will foon be exhausted. The time is near when all thy trials shall have an end: In heaven there is no cross, no complaint, no tears nor forrows for ever.

adly, Faint not, O child of God; for these afflictions are all the hell which thou shalt have; thou hast nothing to fear hereafter. Judas had two hells, one in time, by terror in his conscience, another after this life, which endures to eternity: but all the hell that a bcliever hath is but this light affliction, which is but for a moment.

4thly, Desponding or murmuring in affliction is evil in any, but in none it is to bad as in the children of God. It doth very ill become their covenants, their privileges, their hopes. Have they refigned and given up themselves and all they have to God, by a solemn covenant, and will they fret when he disposeth of them? Didst thou not fay, O believer, in the day when thy heart was stung with fin, and the terrors of God made thee afraid, O let me have Jesus Christ for my Saviour and portion, and I will be content, though I should be stricken with boils like Job, or beg my bread with Lazarus? Now, God tries thee if thou wilt stand to thy word: 0 beware of retracting. Hath not that foul enough, who hath an all-fufficient God for his portion? If God be thine in covenant, that comprehends all things.

5thly, It doth discompose and unfit the foul for any duty. It is ill failing in a storm, so it is ill praying when the heart is in a storm of dif-

quiet and despondency.

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6thly, Your fainting under affliction, and carrying as if the confolations of God were fmall, is enough to stumble others at religion, and make them call the truth of it in question, When they see those that profess religion, and have oft declared that their rejoicing is in Christ Jesus as their portion, begin to fink and despond under outward affliction: O may they not be tempted to fay, "Where is the truth of religion? Where are these divine supports and consolations we have often heard of?"

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Lastly, O then feek to get faith revived, and strenghtened, and resolve with Job to trust in God, though he should flay you. This would be of noble use to keep the heart from finking under pressures of affliction, as the Psalmil found it to his sweet experience, Pfalm xxvii.13. " I had fainted unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living."

III. I come to answer some objections or excuses of fainting believers, which they do commonly alledge as the ground of their discour-

agement in their afflictions.

Object. I. " O (faith one) my afflictions are not ordinary; they are fore preffures I lie un-

der, and of various kinds too."

Answ. 1. O believer, God hath taken the ordering of your lot in his own hand, and he knows what is fittest for you. Should a man be left to carve out his own portion, it would foon appear he would be his own greatest enemy. We would all be for the dainties of pleasure and prosperity, which would not be for our foul's health; as children think green fruit the best diet, because they please their taste; but their parents are wiser to keep them from them.

adly, God may see you have many and strong. lusts to be subdued, and that you need many and fore afflictions to bring you down. Your pride and obstinacy of heart may be strong, your diftempers deeply rooted, and therefore the physic must be proportioned to them; as with the Maelites, Pfal. cvii. 11, 12. "Because they rebelled against the words of God, and contemned the counsels of the Most High: therefore he brought down their heart with labour." O believer, your God and Father, that hath the mixing of your cup and portion, is a wife and skilful physician, who knows your constitution and your need, I Pet. i. 6. "If need be you are in heaviness through manifold temptations." And as he knows your need, so he understands your frength, 1 Cor. x. 13. Faithful is he, that will not suffer you to be tempted above what you ere able."

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3dly, God fends great and fore troubles, that you may have the more experience of God's wisdom and mercy in your support and deliverance: Psalm lxxii. 20. "Thou which hast shewed me great and fore troubles, shall quicken and bring me up again from the depths of the earth."

Object. II. "But (saith another) my affliction is singular; there was never any in my condition."

Answ 11st. It is very ordinary for every manin great distress to reckon his case singular, because he seels best what is nearest himself, but

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is a stranger to what his neighbour feels.

adly, This suggestion is one of Satan's de. vices, that he may tempt a child of God to question his Father's love; but he is a liar. and not to be credited in what he faith: For others of your brethern have been afflicted in the same kind and degree, if not worse, I Pet, v. 9. "Knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world."

3dly, Whatever your cafe be, you must own your fufferings are not fo great as your fins. The trials of God's people in Babylon were fingular; yet Ezra owns, Ezra ix. 13. Thou hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve. If our provoked Judge shall in his clemency fend us to Babylon instead of hell, we have no

cause to complain.

4thly But, O child of God, however thou complainest of the fingularity of affliction now, all fuch complaints will be taken out of thy mouth ere long, and that time is near when thou shalt be made to wonder at the wisdom of God in guiding fo many fons and daughters to glory, through such a variety of Trials, Exercises, Afflictions and Temptations; and made to fay as thefe in Mark vii. 37. He hath done all things well.

Object. II. " But, faith one, my affliction is long continued, and I fee no outgate; and how

can I but faint under it?"

Answ. Ift, It is not so long as your fins deserve; for in justice it might be for ever, it might be, the worm that never dieth, and the fire that is never quenched.

as your reward in heaven, Rom. viii. 18. "For I reckon that the sufferings of the present time, are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

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adly, No length or continuance of affliction here should hinder a believer's comfort, if we take a view of our head and pattern Jesus Christ. How long did his afflictions continue! No end was put to them, till he cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost. Though he was the Son of God, yet from the hour of his birth to the moment of his death, from his manger to his cross, his afflictions still encreased, and he ended his days in the midst of them. Now, Christ is the head of the church, and your great representative, O believers, into a conformity with whom you are predestinated: be content then to be like your head and pattern, to have no case or rest from afflictions till you lie down in the grave; it is "there the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary be at rest," Job iii. 17.

part of Christ's cross, which your loving Redeemer hath contrived for your good, and hath appointed you to take up and bear with him. Now love to Christ should keep you from wearying to bear off a part of Christ's cross, especially when he himself bears the heaviest end of it, nay, bears you and your cross both. It is said of Jacob, Gen. xxix. 20. that "he served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed to him but a few days, for the love he had to her."

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And, shall we not endure a few years affliction for our Lord Jesus Christ, who lived a life of sorrows, and died a cursed death for our sakes! Had we more love to Christ, his cross would not be so tedious to us.

sthly, Should it not be good news to thee, that there is a deliverance for thee at death from all thy troubles, and that this time is hastening and very near? Be not anxious for an outgate here in time, for that savours too much of unbelief and love to the world. Doth it not seem to say, that you would be better content to be turned back again to the stormy tumultuous sea of this world, than to be safely landed at your rest above? That you would be gladder of a few temporal mercies on earth, than to enter upon your eternal inheritance with Christ.?

Object. IV. "No wonder (saith one) that I faintunder my affliction, for I want these consolations and supports which God useth to reserve for afflicted saints."

Answ. 1st. If God be presently chastening you for your sins, you must be content to feel the bitterness of sin, before you can take of the sweetness of God's consolations.

adly, Can you say that your afflictions have duly humbled you, and fitted you for comfort? Have they yet brought you to a willingness to quit and renounce all your beloved sins, and even to part with all your earthly enjoyments and comforts at God's call, and be content with God in Christ alone for your happiness and portion? If this be not done, your af-

fictions have not had their due effect, to prepare you for comfort, and till then you cannot expect it. You are in the hands of a wife and skilful physician, who will not too hastily heal and bind up your fores, so as to let them spoil and fester at the bottom.

adly, Though you have no fensible consolations from God in your present trials, yet you must still labour to keep in the way of duty, and live by faith on his promises. Believe simply that God is good to them that love him, and that there is forgiveness with him to the penitent sinner. And if all stars withdraw their light whilst you are in God's way, then assure yourself the sun is near the arising.

Object. V. "But my affliction is such, that it disables me from duty, and makes me useless and unprofitable; and this makes me faint un-

der my burden."

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Anjw. 1st. God sends afflictions never to unfit, but to quicken you for the performance of duty; to make you repent more thoroughly, pray more fervently, flee to Christ more car-

nestly, and mind heaven more intensely.

affliction incapacitates you for, then remember, if God in his providence disable you for that, it is no longer a duty incumbent on you, and you must not grudge if God take you off, and put others in your room. God is a free and sovereign agent, and will be tied to no mean or instrument whatsomever for carrying on his work.

DIRECT. II. Let all the children of God be exemplary in patience and submission to God under their affliction.

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I Treated of patience, and gave some motives and helps to it, to all afflicted persons in general, Chap. II. Direct. V. But here I shall bring some special argument to Christian patience and submission proper for believers. You that God hath done so much for beyond others, ought to shine in this grace of patience, and be examples to others for it, when God chastens

you, though with very fore affliction.

1/2, Sudy patience under affliction: for it is the common path and beaten road to heaventhat all the faints have trode, who have gone thither before you. Behold the print of the foot-steps of all the cloud of witnesses in this road: and would ye be fingular, and chuse a way of your own? When God folemnly renewed his covenant with Abraham, and he had prepared the facrifice, whereby it was to be ratified and confirmed, God made a finoking furnace to pass betwixt the pieces of the facrifice, Gen. xv. 17. to let him know that there was a furnace of affliction attending the covenant of grace and peace, and all that entered thereto. God has appointed that all the stones of this spiritual and heavenly building shall be hewed and polished by affliction here; and we are not to think that God's ordinary way will be changed for us. We must not think to walk on roses, when so many worthies have marched through briers and thorns to heaven.

2dly, Consider, that the greatest afflictions you meet with are confistent with the love of God, nay spring from his love to you. Every fanctified rod is a gift and royal donation fent by the hand of God to you, Phil. i. 29. " To you it is given, in behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake." Now furely, if we looked on the cross as a gift, an honour, an advantage, and bleffing, we would bear it patiently, Psalm xciv. 12. " Blesfed is the man whom thou chastnest, O Lord." 0 believer, thy temporal cross comes from the same love that thy eternal crown comes from, according to Rev. iii. 19, 21. Men will not take pains to correct stubborn servants, but will turn them out of doors; but love constrains them to chastise their sons. God out of hatred lets many a finner go unpunished in this world: for, why should he prune or dress the tree which he intends for the fire: the malefactor escapes scourging that is condemned to the gallows, Job xxi. 3. "The wicked is referved to the day of destruction; they shall be brought forth to the day of wrath." But it is far otherwise with the childern of God. That is a strange word which Job hath, Job vii. 17, 18. "What is man that thou shouldest magnify him; and that thou shouldest set thine heart upon him: And that thou shouldest visit him every morning, and try him every moment?" Now, if we compare this place with others in the context, we will see how he acknowledgeth that the most overwhelming distress proceeds from the love and care of God, yea, from

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his fixing his heart on him, to magnify him, and do him good; and that for this end he doth chasten him every morning, and try him every moment; and that with fuch afflictions as for the present are so far from being joyous, as that they give the foul no reft, but even make the man weary of his life; as he expresfeth what effects his affliction had on himself. Yea, it may be observed in the providence of God from the foundation of the world, that those who have had most afflictions have had most grace, and the most eminent testimonies of acceptance with God: Jesus Christ the Son of God, had the most afflictions of any; and yet the Father always loved him, and was well pleased with him.

adly, Confider the bright examples of patience which God fets before you in his word, Besides that of his dear Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, of which I spoke before; consider the patience of Job, when he was stript of all earthly comforts, and laid under the greatest afflictions, yet he calmly falls down and worthips God, Job i. 21. and faid, " Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return: The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, bleffed be the name of the Lord. In all this Joh finned not, nor charged God foolishly." Confider the patience of David when he was driven from his throne, from his house, and from God's fanctuary, and all this by his own fon: yet how submissive is he to God? 2 Sam. xv. 26. " Behold, here I am, let him do to me as scemeth good to him." And when Shimei curr

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sed him, and threw stones at him, he patiently bore it, and would fuffer no harm to be done him for it, faying, as in 2 Sam. xvi. 11. " Let him alone, and let him curse, for the Lord hath biden him." Consider the patience of holy Eli when, tho' he heard fuch news as like a fudden clip of thunder made the ears of such as heard it to tingle, and their hearts to tremble, yet he calmly and quietly submitted to it, I Sam. iii. 18. "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good." He doth not fly in God's face in a passion, but falls down at his feet in a humble submission. Observe also the wonderful patience of Aaron, when God afflicted him very fore he is filent and submiffive under the Lord's hand. Lev. x 2. And Aaron held his peace. we consider the greatness of the punishment, we will fee the more cause to commend the greatness of his patience, 1. Aaron lost his children; not his estate or worldly substance, but his children, these are a part of a man's bowels; other earthly loss are not comparable to this; therefore it was that Satan that cunning enemy reserved the loss of Job's children to the last onlet, as his great master-piece and sharpest attack. How fadly did Rachel lament and weep for her children! Matth. ii. 18. Aaron held his peace. 2 Aaron loft his two fons at once. How pathetically did David bewail the loss of one son, 2 Sam. xviii. 33. "O my fon Absalom, my son, my fon," &c. yet Aaron lost both his fons together, and faith not one word; He held his peace. - 3. Aaron lost them by a sudden death, of which he had no warning: Sickness usually

prepares men for the stroke that is coming by death; but Aaron met with a surprising blow, yet he held his peace.—4. Aaron's sons were not taken away by an ordinary stroke of God's hand, but by an extraordinary supernatural rod; for it is said, "There went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord," Lev. x. 2. He lost them in such a manner as might speak forth God's anger; now, a religious father had rather loss all his children in the favour of God, than one child in his anger; yet, whatever were the bitter ingredients of this cup, Aaron was not impatient against God that mixed it for him, but held his peace, because God did it.

4thly, To engage you to patience under your trials. do but compare your case with that of others. Do not say, there is none afflicted as you are; for there are many far deeper plunged in the waters of Mara than you are; some are still upon the rack, and spend their whole days and years in continual fighting and struggling; as in Pfal. xxxi. 10. " My life is spent with grief, and my years with fighing." Have you fore distress in your bodies? others have grievous wounds in their fouls. Do you bear the wrath of man? others bear the wrath of God. You have but one single trial, others have many twisted together. Some are stript of all comforts, you have comfort still remaining. You may have many sad things in your trial, but you have not ground as yet to complain as the Pfalmist doth, Pfal. xlii 7. " All thy waves and thy billows are gone over me."

Take a view of what the Son of God, what the apostles, and what the martyrs and other worthies have endured. They had trial of cruel mockings, scourgings, bonds and imprisonments: they wandered in defarts, in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth, being destitute, afflicted, tormented. They were tempted, they were crucified, stoned to death, sawn asfunder, flain with the sword, &c. And yet, how well did they take with the cross? faith Paul, "We glory in tribulation," Rom. v. 2. And what faith James ? James i. 2. " My brethren, count all shall joy when ye fall into divers temptations." As if he had faid, Rejoice aye more and more that you are afflicted: God is magnifying you, he is visiting you, doing you good, taking the more pains on you, and fitting you for glory.

5thly, The confideration of God's former mercies and kindnesses to you should engage you to patience in trouble, and make you blush to take any thing ill out of God's hand. Thus Job taught his impatient wife, Job ii. 10. "What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" O beliver, let not thy afflictions cause thee to bury thy mercies in oblivion. Has not God brought thee from Satan's family, and put you among his children; and will you forget to undervalue that hour? Hath he struck off thy fetters, taken off thy prison-garments, and set you at liberty; and, will you be unthankful? Hath he given thee Christ for thy treasure and portion, and entitled you to his unsearchable riches:

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and, will you be discontented? hath he given you the graces of his Spirit, which are more precious than rubies; and, will you quarrel when he smites in some outward things? hath he made you an heir of glory, and provided eternal mansions above for you; and will you be fretful for want of some trifles here? The view Moses had of the recompence of reward in heaven, caused him chuse to suffer affliction

patiently with the people of God.

6thly, The time of affliction is usually God's gracious trysting season with his people, in the time of their rarest comforts and sweetest foretaltes of heaven, according to 2 Cor. i. c. Paul and Silas did never fing more joyfully than when they were laid in the inner prison, with their backs torn with scourges, and their seet fast in the stocks, Acts xvi. 24. And when was it that Jacob saw the angels of God ascending and defeending upon the ladder that reached betwist heaven and earth, but at the time when he was in a destitute case, forced to lie in the open field having no canopy but the heavens, and no pillow but a flone? When was it that the three children faw Christ in the likeness of the Son of man walking with them, but when they were in the furnace, and when it was hotter than ordinary? When was it that Ezekiel had a vision of God, but when sitting soliatry by the river Chebar in the land of his captivity! When was it that John got a glorious vision of Christ, but when he was an exile in the ille of Patmos? And, when was it that Stephen faw the heavens opened, and Christ standing at the right hand of God pleading for him, but when

they were stoning and bruising him to death? So that the most remarkable experiences of God's kindness, that believers get in this world, have been trysted to the time of affliction: the consideration whereof should move every Christian to wait on the Lord, and bear his cross with patience.

7thly, When you are helped to christian patience and submission under God's hand, it doth contribute much to the credit of religion, and to the conviction of the world, that there is a certain reality in the truths of the gospel, and a great efficacy in the grace of God, which bears you up, and carries you through, beyoned the

strength of nature.

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Lastly, O believer, bear up with patience under the cross, for thou hast not long to bear it. God's wrath on the church abideth but for a moment, yea, a little moment, Ifa. xxvi. 20." Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and thut thy doors about thee, hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.". Surely a moment, a little moment, which is the smallest part of time, will foon be over; and wilt thou not have patience for amoment? The Pfalmist supported himself with this confideration, Pfalm ciii. 9. "He will not always chide, neither will he keep his anger for ever." The time of indignation will foon be over-past, and the time of consolation will succced. Obeliever, the end of all thy trials is near; think on it, and look for it. Is it bodily pain or sickness that is thy affliction? then consider. the end of it will be either life or death; if

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death, then what thou sufferest is the last burnt, bear it patiently. These enemies you now see, you will see them again no more. In the mansions above there is no pain nor crying: the inhabitants there shall never say they are sick; and one hour with them will make thee forget all thy momentary afflictions. If the issue shall be life, you will be ashamed, when well, that you had no more patience whilst sick.

I shall close this direction with the words of the apostle James, James v. 10. "Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of of the Lord, that the Lord is very pitiful, and

of tender mercy."

DIRECT. III. Let believers be much employed in the praises of God, while they are under affliction, by sickness or otherwise.

A swe should bless the Lord at all times, and keep up good thoughts of God on every occasion; so especially in the time of affliction. Hence we are commanded to glorify the Lord in the fires, Isa. xxiv. 15. And this the three children did in the hottest furnace. So Job blessed God when he had taken away his greatest comforts, Job i. 21. And this is agreeable to that command, 1 Thess. v. 18. "In every thing give thanks." I grant indeed we cannot give thanks for affliction as as

fliction, but either as it is the means of some good to us, or as the gracious hand of God is some way remarkable therein towards us. In this respect, there is no condition on this side of hell, but we have cause to praise God in, even in the greatest calamities. Hence it was that David, when he speaks of his affliction, Pial. cxix 67. adds presently, "Thou art good and dost good." And he declares, ver. 65. "Thou hast dealt well with thy servant, "O Lord, according unto thy word." Hence Paul and Silas praised God when they were

scourged and imprisoned.

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Well then, O believer, obey the command of thy God, and imitate his worthies, by praifing God under thy affliction. 1. This practice would be very pleasant and acceptable to God: for as music is sweetest on the waters, so praise is most agreeable to God from an afflicted soul on the waters of trouble. It is a fign of a noble and generous spirit, to sing the praises of God's goodness, while his hand is afflicting us. Diffress and danger will make the wickedest to pray; but it is a principle of love and gratitude that makes the foul to praise. 2. It would bring credit to religion, to see faints thankful and praising God under the cross: it would make people fay, furely they find sweetness in God and his ways, that we fee not; they have meat to eat that the world knows not of. And this would invite strangers to come and try a religious life. The joyful praises of the martyers at the stakes, and in the flames, made people go home with love to religion in their hearts.

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3. If the issue of your affliction should be death, this employment of praise would be a sweet preparative to sit and dispose you for the work of heaven. Use yourself much to this heavenly life, and be oft trying to sing the song of Moses and the Lamb in time of sickness and trouble; and this would sweeten the thoughts of death, and make you incline to be there, where praise is their constant work.

Quest. What should be the subject of a believer's thanksgiving and praise under affliction?

Answ. He hath manifold grounds of praise; as ist. Upon the account of God's mercies to him through the bypast part of his life. His mercies to thee, O believer, cannot be numbered; compare thy mercies with thy crosses, and thou wilt soon see thy receivings are far greater than thy sufferings. Thou hast had many days of plenty for one day of scarcity, many days of liberty for one day of straits, many days of health for one day of sickness. And are not these to be remembered with praise?

affliction, thou hast ground to praise God, 0 believer, thou wastborn in a land of light, where thou hadst the means of conversion to God, and acquaintance with Jesus Christ; and especially, that God of his free grace made these means effectual to work a saving change on you, when others were passed by. Is not this matter of praise, that he opened your eyes, humbled your soul, and renewed your heart! that he gave you Christ, forgave your sins, and adopted you into his family, and made you an heir

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of heaven? Oh! what a fad cafe would it be, if you were yet in your fins, and in the bondage of Satan; if you had conversion work to begin to, if you had your faith and justification and interest in Christ all to seek, and all your preparations for heaven to make: if you had all this to do with a fick and pained body, and a disordered mind that cannot command one settled thought, with the terrible view of death and eternity before your eyes. This is the case that God in justice might have left you to. Well then, ought you not to praise God, that fent his Holy Spirit in time to determine yuor heart to close with Christ, and be reconciled to that God, you are shortey to appearbefore; and that these sins, which now would have been your terror are all forgiven and washen away through the blood of Jefus Christ.

3dly, is it not matter of praise in thy greatest trouble, sthat thou hast a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, to provide a mansion with the Father for thee, and to receive thy soul when separated from the body? "that,

where he is, there you may be also?"

fends itch suitable harbingers, as sickness and trouble, to tell you that death is approaching, and that he should take such pains on you to we an you from the world, and make you wiling to be gone. Many of God's people, that have been averse to dying at the beginning of a sickness, by the increase and continuance of it, have been brought to be well satisfied to depart that they may be with Christ.

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sthly, You have ground to bless God for timing your afflictions so well, that he sent them not till he saw you stood in need of them; he saw a need for them, as I Pet. i. 6. and he would not let you want what was needful.

6thly, You ought to praise God, that he mitigates your trials, and proportions your burden for your back, that when he takes a rod to you, he hath not made it a scorpion; that when he deprived you of one comfort and enjoyment, he did not strip you of all, and leave you wholly comfortless: that when you suffer in one thing, he hath not made you to fuffer in every thing, in foul, body, estate, relations and all together; that instead of afflicting you for a few days, he hath not made your whole life a scene of misery and affliction. Bless God, that he punisheth you less, unspeakably less, than your iniquities deserve; that your sick-bed is not hell, your fever is not everlasting burnings, your pain is not the gnawing of the worm that never dicth.

your affliction is not so great as that of some others, and even of some that were very dear to God, and had not grieved him so much as you have done. Remember the trials that some have endured, of "whom the world was not worthy," which I mentioned before, as recorded. Heb. xi. Yours are nothing to theirs, nothing to Job's, that eminent servant of God. Observe the difference with thanksgiving and praise.

8thly, You have reason to bless God for the strength and support he hath given you under

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affliction. You would foon fink and fuccumb under a finall burden, if he did not support you by his grace; but, when he bears you up, the heaviest trial shall not fink you. Have you not met with some afflictions, you have thought at a distance you would never have been able to bear up under them? yet, when they have come, you have found them light and portable, by reason of the strength God hath bestowed on you.

the mercies and bleffings which God hath continued with you, are far greater than these he hath taken from you; For the hath taken this and that temporal bleffing from you, yet he hath not taken Christ from you, nor his holy spirit from you; he hath not separated you from his love, nor cut you off from all hopes of heaven. However great your trials be, yet still there is a mixture of mercy in your lot,

which should be matter of praise.

Lastly, You have cause, O believer, to bless God, that all the afflictions he brings on you are in love, and for your profit. All his ways are mercy and truth to you. If he smile, it is in mercy; and if he smite, it is in mercy. God may change his dispensations, but his heart is still towards them, and the cords wherewith he sourgeth them, are cords of love. Their profit is the great thing he aims at, in all their chastisements, Heb. xii. 10. He designs thereby to reclaim them from their wanderings, cut off provisions for their lusts, make them pant and long for a better state, and cause them mends

their pace toward it. Hence David saith, "It is good for me that I was afflicted: For before I was afflicted, I went astray, but now I have learned to keep thy word," Psal. exix 67, 71. From all which it appears you have manifold grounds of praise, even in the time of affliction.

DIRECT IV. Let the children of God, when visited with sickness, set about actual preparation for death and eternity,

I Very believer hath his main work done, and is always in a gracious state, by reason of his union with Jesus Christ, his reconciliation with God, through the merit of his blood, and the universal change that is wrought in him by regenerating and fanctifying graces upon which account every child of God hath habitual preparation for meeting with death. Yet because frequently, when fickness cometh, there are many things out of order with them, that make death frightful and undefirable, they must fet about actual preparation for death, and feek to have their fouls made ready for the bridegroom's coming. And here I shall shew wherein this actual readiness of believers doth confist, which should be their proper work and exercise in time of fickness, especially when fickness is lingering, and doth not destroy the use of reason. But beware of thinking that this should be delayed till fickness come: No, no; the time of health is the main working feafon, and all should be then by-hand, as far as possible. But, seeing even the best generally find much to do at the you Go fitti

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very last, I shall give the following advices for

your actual preparation.

If, Seeing sickness is a mean appointed of God for his people's good, and particularly for sitting them for a better world; labour earnestly to reap the benefit of sickness, seek God's bleffing upon it, that thereby you may be helped to discover more of the evil of sin, that you may hate and abhor it the more, and that you may see more effectually the vanity and vexation of the world, and get your heart loosed from all the things of time, and brought to a willingness to be dissolved, that you may be with Christ.

2dly, Seeing the time of sickness and death is the time of your greatest need, beg carnestly of God, for your Redeemer's sake, such special assistance, insluences and operations of his holy spirit, as he knows needful for you in your prefent low and weak condition, in order to carry on and compleat your assual readiness for meeting with himself at death, and entering into the invisible world, and being fixed unalterably in

your everlasting state.

of faith in the blood of Christ, for removing all grounds of quarrel and controversy betwixt God and your soul. And in order thereto, review your bypast life, and look into your heart also, and search out every predominant sin and idol of jealousy; for if there be any iniquity regarded in your heart, and unrepented of by you, it may occasion no little anguish and bitterness of spirit in a dying hour. Well, when thou liast discovered sin, humbly confess and

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bewail it before the Lord, and ask forgiveness. for it thro' the blood of Jesus Christ the Son of God, which cleanseth from all sin. Yea, make confession of all thy sins, and particularly reflect upon the fountain and spring of them, viz. thy original sin. Know the plague of thy own heart, and mourn over it, mourn for the loss and mif-fpending of much precious time. Mourn for the unprofitableness of thy life. Now, when the ax is laid to the root of the tree by fickness, it is high time to mourn for your unfruitfulness under the means of grace and waterings of the holy Spirit. Mourn for your finning against such light and love as have been many days displayed to you in the glorious gospel. And, in a special manner, mourn for your fins of omission, which commonly are but little minded by us. Thus mourn for all thy fins, till thou dost water thy couch with tears. It is most suitable that death should find every man, even every child of God, in the exercise of mourning and repentance: for they that thus fow in tears, shall eternally reap in joy. But see that your tears run much in the gospel channel, and flow from the believing views of a crucified Christ, whom you have pierced by your fins. And, in the midst of your mourning, be still. aiming to take faith's grips of the clefts of this rock, for sheltering thy soul from the guilt of bypast fins; fay, "Lord Jesus, I have no resuge but thy wounds, no fountain but thy blood, no covert but thy righteousness. - And seeing thou freely makest offer of thy merits for my prorection, and invitest even the chief of sinners to

come unto thee, faying, Look unto me, and be ye faved; Lord, I embrace the offer, and flee to thee to cover me." O believer do this, not once or twice, but do it a hundred times over; do it as long as thou hast breath to draw in the world. Be still breathing to the very last, after a crucified Jesus for relief against the guilt of sin, which thou art always contracting, and wilt be till the earthly house of this tabernacle be disfolved.

4thly, In order to your actual readiness to go forth to meet the bridegroom, when coming to you by death, you must do as the wife virgins, Matth xxv. 7. "Arife and trim your lamps." As it is not enough to have a fair lamp of a profession, so it is not sufficient to have only the oil of grace in the lamp; nay, or to have it burning in some degree. There is more requisite at this time, that the foul may be actully ready; the lamp must be trimmed, which imports. 1st, A suppying it with more oil; you must feek to have your grace increased, to have new degrees, new strength, and new supplies of grace given you from God, to fit you for the last conflict with your spiritual enemies, and especially the last enemy death. 2dly, It imports a stirring up of the oil, and raising the wick fome higher: So there must be an excitatian of grace, which may be in a low declining condition : you must endeavour to stir and raise it up to a more lively exercise, and more elevated acts. Stir up the gift that is in thee: make the oil burn clear and shine bright. Bring faith, love repentance and holy defires, to a lively

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exercife. 3dly, This trimming imports the cleanfing of the lamp, by taking away the dead ashes
that hinder the light, or prevent its burning so
clearly as otherwise it would. So you must
labour to take away the dead ashes of corruption, that hinder the shining of grace: remove
all unbelief, earthliness, deadness, felf, and
formality, and whatever else doth suppress
the exercise of faith, love, and heavenlymindedness: let all these dead ashes be snuffed away by repentance and mortification. As
you ought to strive earnestly against all these
heart-evils in time of health, so now labour to
give them a dead stroke when death's harbinger gives you a summons.

5thly, Be diligent in gathering and fumming up all your evidences for heaven and eternal life, that so you may not venture into the dark valley at an uncertainty. The comfort of dying will much depend on the clearness of your evidences; it is therefore your wisdom to examine them carefully, and fee if you can fay, "I know in whom I have believed; I have confented with my foul to the method of falvation laid down in the covenant of grace. I am defirous that the glory of it should be eternally ascribed to the free grace of God, and the creature be wholly abased in his fight. I have chosen God for my portion, and Christ for my only Saviour; and the happiness which I aim at is, to enjoy God in Christ for ever. And, in order thereto. I depend on the holy Spirit to apply the redemption which Jesus Christ hath purchased to me,

and to fanctify me perfectly. There is no fin

but what I hate and desire to part with. I would rather have more holiness, than to have health and all the pleasures in the world. I earnestly desire the flourishing of Christ's kingdom, and prefer Jerusalem to my chiefest joy." If this your evidences be clear, you may chearfully take death by the cold hand, and welcome its grim messengers, and long to be gone that you may be with Christ. You may say as Psalm xxiii 4. "When I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me." You may go off the stage with the Psalmist's words in your mouth, Psal. xxxi. 5. "Into thine hand I commit my spirit, for thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth."

6thly Labour earnestly to overcome the love of life and fears of death, fo as to be content to part with all things here at God's call. O believer, what is there in this earth to tempt thee to hang back, when God calls thee to depart? while you are here, you may lay your account with many losses, crosses, disappointments, griefs, and calamities of all forts. Friends will fail you, cnemies will hate you, lusts will molest you, Satan will tempt you, and the world will deceive you. Death is the way that the dearest of God's faints, and all the cloud of witnesses have gone before you; yea, the Lord Isfus your head hath trode this path, and hath taken the fling out of death, and have paved a way through its dark valley, that his people may fafely follow him. Hath the Captain of your falvation gone before you, and will any of his

foldiers shrink to follow him? Art thou content to remain always at the same distance from him. and to enjoy no more of his presence than now you have? Are you satisfied to live for ever with no more knowledge of God, no more love to Christ, no more holiness or heavenly-mindedness, than at present you have? Do you not groan under your remaining ignorance, deadness, wanderings, pride, passion, unbelief, selfishness, worldliness, and other fins and lusts that here befet you? And, are you not defirous to go to the place where you will be eternally free of them all, and where you shall never complain of a dull, dead, and fenfeless frame of heart, or of any heart-weariness, or wandering in duty any more? For the heart shall then be as a fixed pillar in the temple of God, and shall go no more out; the eternal adoration and praises of God shall be the soul's delight and element for ever. By such considerations strive to conquer the fears of death and defires of life, which are often great clogs to the people of Ged in their preparations for flitting.

glory which shortly all believers will see and enjoy. Be much in the contemplation of the glorious company above; behold Christ upon his glorious throne, at the right hand of God, and Abraham, David, Peter, Paul, and all the rest of the faithful ones, with their crowns of righteousness, triumphing about their Redeemer. Think, O believer, how happy will that day be, when thou shalt meet with thy father, and thy brethren, and when thou shalt see thy elder brother on the throne, ready to

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pass sentence in thy favours. What melody will that fentence found in thine ears, Come ye ble fed of my Father, &c. What frame wilt thou be in, when he fets the crown of glory on thy head? O eternally free love! wilt thou cry, "O Saviour, thou didft wear a crown of thorns, that I might wear a crown of glory; thou didst groan on the crofs, that I might now fing.-Wonderful free love, that chused me, when thousands were passed by; that saved me from ruin, when my companions in fin must burn in hell for ever." Think how ravishing it will be to meet with your godly acquaintances in heaven, with whom you prayed, praised, and conversed here! Will you not then cry out, "O my brethren, what a change is here! This glorious place is not like the poor dwellings we had on earth; this body, this foul, this state, this place, our clothes, our company, our langnage, our thoughts, are far unlike those we had then! The bad hearts, the body of death, the corruptions and temptations we then complained of, are all now gone. We have no more fears of death or hell, no more use for repentance or prayer, faith or hope; these are now swallowed up in immediate vision, eternal love, joy and praise." And for thy help, O believer, in meditating on these things, read some parts of the book of Revelation, or cause them to be read to you; and suppose with yourself, you had been a companion with John in the life of Patmos, and had got fuch a view of the glorious Majesty, the bright thrones, the heavenly hosts, and shining splendour which he saw; the saints

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in their white robes, with crowns on their heads, and palms in their hands, and heard them finging the fong of Moles and the Lamb, and trumpeting forth their eternal hallelujals; what a heavenly rapture wouldst thou have been in! Well then, O believer, thou shalt shortly have clearer and sweeter fights than all these which John or any of the faints ever saw here upon earth. Surely that heavenly glory is a subject worthy of thy thoughts, and most suitable for thee to meditate on in time of sickness, and when in the view of death.

8thly, It would be also very suitable at this time, in order to your actual readiness for death, to be frequently looking out and longing for Christ's coming. As Abraham stood in his tentdoor, ready to go forth to meet the angels that were fent unto him, so should the believer keep himself in a waiting posture at this time. He should be like the loving wife, that longs and looks for the coming of her absent husband, according to his letters to her. By this time (thinks she) he will be at such a place, and against such a time he will be at another place, and so in a few days I will see him. It is the character of believers, they are fuch as love his appearing, 2 Tim. iv. 8 . They defire his coming, Cant. viii 14. Make hofte my beloved: Even so come, Lord Jesus, come quickly. Believers should look upon themselves as pilgrims here, wandering in a wilderness, absent from home, and at a distance from their father's house; and in time of affliction it is very proper for them to be crying as David doth, Pial, ly. 6, " O that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest: I would hasten my cscape from the windy tempest." "O when shall the time of my pilgrimage, and the days of my banishment be finished, that I may get home to my country and friends above! Oh! my Lord is gone, my Saviour hath left the earth, and entered into his glory! my friends and brethren are gone to their bleffed rest, where they see God's face, and fing his praise for ever: and, how can I be willing to stay behind, when they are gone? Must I be finning here, when they are ferving God above? Must I be groaning and fighing, when they are triumphing and dividing the spoil? Surely I will look after them, and cry, O Lord, how long? When shall I be with my Saviour and my God?"

DIRECT.V. Let believers in time of sickness endeavour all they can to glorify God, and edify those that are about them, by their speech and behaviour.

If ever a child of God be active to promote the honour and glory of God, it should be in time of sickness, and when death may be approaching. And there is good reason for it; for, is, This may be the last opportunity that ever thou shalt have to do any thing for God, and therefore thou shouldst study to improve it to the utmost. Heaven, to which thou art going, is the place where thou shalt receive thy reward; but thou canst have no access there to advance God's glory, by commending God and

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Christ, and religion to sinners, or weak believ. ers. Upon this account, many of God's child. ren have been content to suspend their heavenly happiness for a while, and to stay upon the earth for some longer time. I have read of a certain martyr, when going to fuffer, who expressed fome forrow that he was going thither, where he should do his God no more service, to wit, in the sense above explained. And of another, that faith, " If it were possible there could be place for any grief in heaven, it would arise from the Christian's considering, that he did so little for God while he was upon earth." Now is the working season, O believer, be busy while it lasts, according to the example of thy blessed Saviour, John ix. 4 "I must work the work of him that tent me, while it is day; for the night cometh wherein no man can work." This consideration should make thee bestir thyself with the greatest activity, like Samson before his death, who, when he could have no more opportunity to serve God and his church, he cried to God, and faid, Judges xvi. 28. "O Lord God, remember me I pray thee, and strengthen me this once." And, then, he bowed himself with all his might, to pull down the pillars of Dagon's temple, being willing to facrifice his life to the ruin thereof.

adly, The holy speech and carriage of dying believers may, through the bleffing of God, make deep impression upon the hearts of unregenerate men that are witnesses to them. These who have derided the people of God for the strictness of their lives, and despised their coun-

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elsand reproofs, as proceeding from humour or preciseness; yet have begun to notice their words and actions, when they have feen them on fick-beds, and on the borders of eternity, and to have other thoughts of religion and hoiness than formerly they had. Now they think the man is in good earnest, and speaketh the thoughts of his heart; and, if ever he can be believed, it must be now. It is most convincing to carnal persons, to see believers bearing up with patience in their sickness; to hear them fpeaking good of God, commending his ways, and rejoicing in God as their portion, in midst of their sharpest pains; to see them behaving as those that are going to dwell with Christ, fmiling and praising God, when friends are fighing and weeping about them. This inclines them to think, furely there must be a reality in religion, there is a visible difference betwixt the death of the righteous and of the wicked. Hence a wicked Baalam wished to die the death of the righteous, and to have his last end like his. It left a conviction upon that young man's conscience, who said to his loose companion, after they had visited godly Ambrose on his death-bed, and faw how chearful he was, and triumphing over approaching death, "O that I might live with thee, and die with Ambrose!" Nay, fuch fights might draw them not only to defire to die the death of the righteous, but also to resolve to live their lives. If carnal men law believers going off the stage with such confidence and joy, as becomes these that are entering into eternal rest with Christ, and these

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that are going out of a howling wilderness to a glorious Canaan; it, might be a powerful invitation to them to go and seek after the same

felicity.

3dly, This likewise would be very edifying and confirming to all that fear God. much would it contribute to establish them in the practice of holiness, and to quicken them in their diligence in ferving and glorifying of God in the days of their health, to hear a dying believer fay, "Of all the time which I have lived, I have no comfort now in reflecting upon one hour, but what I spent in the service of God, Were I to begin my life, I would redeem time more carefully than ever. One hour in communion with God is far sweeter than many years spent in worldly pleasures. Come here, then, all ye that fear God, and I will tell you what he hath done for my foul. O tafte and fee that God is good?"

4thly, Consider the examples of God's children in former ages, how useful and edifying their words have been, at such a time, to all round about them. But this head I intend to

infift fully upon afterwards.

Quest. But how shall I behave so as I may glorify God and edify others, when I am sick or dying? I would have some particular directions for it.

Answ. 1st, You may do this by your patience under pain, and submission to God's will, with respect to the event, whether life or death. It is stumbling to others, to see believers fretful in trouble, and unwilling to leave the world,

when God calls them. But it is most convincing and confirming to fee them frankly refigning themselves to God's disposal, saying, "Let God himself choose for me; he is wise, and knoweth best what is needful and most proper for me: I have no will, but God's will." For any man to defire to live when God calls him to die, or to defire to die when God calls him to live, is equally a fign of cowardice: for he that defires to live, is afraid to look death in the face; and he that defires to die, would flee from some calamity, and take thelter in death. But he is the most valiant man that can die willingly when God would have him die, and live as willingly when God would have him live; this is true Christian valour.

adly, By pious exhortations and warnings to these that are about you. It may be the last occasion you may have of glorifying God this way: O do not lose the season which may be nlefully improven for the good of fouls. For thus a believer may bring more honour to God, and more advantage to precious fouls by his fickness and death, than ever he did by all his health and life in the world; for their speeches have more weight with people at such a time, than at any other. Hence the Patriarchs, knowing the prevalency of fuch words, do urge Jofeph with Jacob's dying charge, Gen. 1. 16, 17. "And they fent a meffenger unto Joseph, faying, Thy father did command before he died, faying, So shall ye say unto Joseph, Forgive, I pray thee now, the the trespals of thy brethren." &c. And as we ought to be ready to

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give good counsel to all when we lie on sickbeds, so especially we should be concerned for children and near relations: they are more affected than others with our sickness, and so will they be with our sayings; our admonitions may do them good, when we are rotting in the dust.

Quest. What ought to be the subject of our discourses and exhortations to others at such a time?

Answ. 1st, It is very proper to be much in commending the Master you have served, and the excellency of his service, to these that are about you. Tell them of the equity and goodness of these laws which you have obeyed, and of the bounty and faithfulness of that Lord whom you have worshipped, loved, and praised; and of the greatness and eternity of that reward you are going to possess. Let the children of God extol their Father, and his care of them, and kindness to them. Let the ransomed of the Lord magnify their Redeemer, and his wonderful love and sufferings for them. Tell others what sweetness and satisfaction you have found in your own experience in attending God's ordinances, and in fecret duties; what comfort you have found in Christ, and the promises of his covenant. And thus let your last breath be spent in exalting and commending Christ and religion to others.

adly, Be warning others of the vanity of the world, and of all its wealth and pleasures. Tell them that they may see by your case, that these things which people are bewitched with in the

day of their health, can signify nothing to a sick or dying man; they cannot ease us in our pains, they can afford no peace to a troubled soul, they cannot lengthen our lives one hour, and far less can they save from the wrath of an angry God. "Oh," may you say, "what a miserable case had I been in at this time, if I had had no better portion than this world, and nothing else to look to but its riches and pleasures! Wherefore, Sirs, set not your hearts upon it, but forsake it before you be forsaken by it, and make choice of that which will be supporting to you in the evil day."

3dly, Be warning them of the evil of fin, and what mischief and deceitfulness you have found in it. Tell them, that though the devil and the sless would tempt you to look on fin as a harmless thing, yet the pleasure will soon be gone, and a sharp sling will be lest behind. Sin will appear no light matter, when the soul is going hence into the awful presence of a holy God. You would give a thousand worlds then for Christ, and the blood of atonement to answer

for your fins. Land who with he will and

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4thly, Tell them of the great difference betwixt the godly and wicked man's choice. The
godly man chuseth the better part that cannot
be taken from him; he lays up his treasure in
heaven where none can reach it, so that it yields
him rich supplies when sickness and death come
upon him. But O how foolish is the wicked
man's choice, that for a moment's fleshly pleasure, doth lose his immortal soul, and everlasting happiness! Warn them to mind the one

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thing needful in time, and not to pamper their bodies for the worms, but to fet themselves presently to close with the offers of Christ, and make sure an interest in his right cousies to co-

ver them in the evil day.

5thly, Be telling them of the evil of floth and negligence in the work of their falvation: and be exhorting them to mind it, and do it with all their might. For however some may cenfure and deride God's people now for their strictness, diligence, and zeal in the matters of religion; yet, when they come to die, they will be ready to wish that they had been more diligent in falvation-work; that they had loved God, fled to Christ, and had sought and served him with all their hearts and fouls; and to cry, "O for a little more time! O if God would recover and try us once more with health, how diligent would we be!" And tell them, that these who have been most serious and painful in falvation-work, yet, when they come to die, do much lament their floth and egligence: yea, these that have been most reproached by the world for their diligence and fervency, do often wish at that time, " O that we had been a thousand times more diligent and laborious in God's service!"

6thly, Labour to persuade others of the preciousness of time, the wildom of improving the time of youth, and of health; and the great folly of delaying repentance, and putting it off to a sick-bed. Say to them, "I find now by experience, that a time of sickness is a most unsit season to do any thing to purpose for the soul; my mind is so diverted and indisposed for spiritual work by sickness and pain, that I cannot attain to any suitable composure for it. And how miserable were I, if I had all my work to begin at this time! O take warning, and improve precious time, and especially the day of the gospel, the time of the Spirit's strivings, and the time of youth, which is the most usual season of the conversion of souls, and of bringing sinners into acquaintance with Jesus Christ."

DIRECT. VI. Let God's children, when fick or dying, be expressing a great concern for the advancement of the kingdom of Christ, and of true religion in the rising generation.

7 EAL and public-spiritedness for Christ's L interest is very becoming his people in all the periods of their life, but more especially at this time. When Christ is ready to take you to his kingdom in heaven, O be not unmindful of his kingdom on earth. It would be acceptable to God, and pleasant in the fight of men, to fee you expressing a warm concern for the rifing age, and for promoting the welfare of the fouls of your children, and others that furvive you: and feeng you can be no longer ufeful to these you leave behind, by your counsels, examples, or prayers, as formerly; do your utmost for them now. And this concern the children of God in time of sickness may evidence several ways.

1st, By earnest prayers to God, both for the prosperity of his church, and the flourishing of

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religion in general; and also for your children and relations in particular, that they may be a holy seed, and a generation to serve God, and shew forth his praise in the world, when you are gone off the stage.

2dly, By intrusting the care of your childrens education to such tutors and guardians as will be much concerned for their souls, and will set before them godly examples and instructions in their young and tender years.

galy, By filling your latter-wills and testaments with many pious advices and solemn charges to your children and relations, with respect to their serving of God, and worshipping him in their samilies and in secret; so as they can never look into your testaments, and the legacies left to them, but they will hear something that may be affecting, upstirring, and

edifying to their fouls.

Athly, By honouring the Lord with your substance, and leaving something of what God hath blessed you with to pious uses; particularly for the religious education of the children of the poor, for buying Bibles to them, and other good books; and for propagating of Christian knowledge in ignorant places, such as the highlands and islands, by erecting and maintaining schools therein: which glorious work is happily begun, and pretty far advanced by that honourable societ at Edinburgh, whose treasurer is ready to receive donations from all such as the Lord pleaseth to move to make a free-will offering for promoting that pious design. Many pious persons have contributed already thereto; and

it were desirable that others, whom God hath enabled for it, should mind it before they die: for by fatal experience we may observe, that the most godly parents do not know how their chileren will employ the estate they leave them, whether as suel for their lusts, or as oil to feed the lamps in God's sanctuary. It is proper for themselves then, before they go off the stage, to dispose of some part of their substance, for the glory and service of that God who gave it unto them.

5thly, It might contribute to promote piety, and to make the deeper impressions upon the minds of your children and friends, if, under the warnings of death, you should imitate the example of the prophet Elijah, who in his lifetime made a writing which he procured to be delivered to king Jehoram after his death, 2 Chron. xxi. 12. So in like manner, you might write letters, and leave them in the hands of your friends and executors, full of advices, charges, admonitions, confolations, or threatenings, to be delivered to your children or friends, upon occasion either of their good or bad conversation after your death: which probably would be more regarded by them, than the counsels you gave them in the time of your life; for in some respect they would be received and read by them, as if they were letters from heaven.

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an Mar syste decreasing a massist bas sook onto, analysis and to manorist out son mem DIRECT. VII. Let the children of God labour to fortify themselves what they can against all Satan's temptations and assaults, which they may expect to meet with in time of sickness and affliction.

TIME of affliction is commonly a time of temptation: for the old serpent knows the fittest seasons for affaulting the children of God; and he will not be wanting to imrove this opportunity of advantage for fetting upon the poor foul. When Pharaoh heard that the people were entangled in the wilderness, he pursued them; so, when Satan sees a soul entangled with distresses and troubles, he thinks it high time to make an attack. He feeks to winnow. and fift away the believer's grace, and therefore he comes when the corn is a threshing by When Job was smitten in his estate, health, and all other comforts then this coward falls upon him, and tempts him to impatience, murmuring, and wrong thoughts of God.

At this time, O believer, you have special need to be on your guard, and look out. Reckon always, when sickness or trouble cometh, the prince of this world cometh also. Stand then to your defence, and put on your armour, especially the shield of faith, that you may be able to quench the siery darts of the devil. You have need at this time to put in practice our Lord's direction, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." Pray for wisdom and skill to counteract him, and that you may not be ignorant of his devices; and pray

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particularly for grace to make you proof against all his falle representations of God and his providence to you; for he that durst represent Job falfely to an all-feeing and all-knowing God, will with much boldness represent God falfely to you, who fee and know so little. He will be ready to tempt you to think that God is angry with you, and dealing with you as an enemy. Thus was Job tempted, Job xxxiii. 10, 11. " Behold, he findeth occasions against me, he counteth me for his enemy: he putteth my feet in the stocks, he marketh all my paths." But observe what Elihu answers, " In this thou art not just: God is greater than man. Why dost thou strive against him? for he giveth not account of any of his matters." But feeing I spoke before of the wrong thoughts of God, which we are apt to harbour in time of affliction, Chap. II. Direct. 3. I shall proceed to speak of some other temptations wherewith Satan doth affault God's people when in distress, and furnish some answers thereto.

1. Saith the tempter, "Thou art nothing but a hypocrite; all thy religious performances have been done in hypocrify, to be seen of men: thou never hast repented or believed sincerely

in the fight of God."

Answ. I acknowledge there hath been much hypocrify in me, but I hope it is not allowed and reigning hypocrify; I always wrestled against it; wherefore I am not an hypocrite. I regarded the esteem of men too much, but I hope I value the esteem of God much more. My saith and repentance are weak, but I hope they

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are fincere. And whatever defects and short-comings have formerly cleaved to these graces in me, I do now unseignedly repent of all my sins, I look to him that I have pierced, and mourn. I am heartily willing to be justified by the righteousness of Christ alone, and to be cleansed and sanctified by his Spirit: and here I give up myself to Christ as my only Saviour. And this I hope is, through grace, true repenting and believing, which God will accept, for Christ's sake, whatever my former defects have been.

Tempt. 2. But saith the tempter, "Thy repentance cannot be true; for thy heart is not broken, and thine eyes do not shed tears for sin."

Answ. It is my very great burden, and confiant complaint to God, that I cannot attain to a greater measure of forrow and contrition for fin: but yet it is my comfort that repentance is not to be confined to such degrees and symptoms of forrow as some do win at. I hope, I can say through grace, that my heart is set against all sin, great and small; and I would give all I have in the world to be wholly delivered from sin.

Tempt. 3 Saith the tempter, "But thy day day of grace is past, it is too late for thee to think of repenting or believing; God will not

accept of thee now."

Answ. But I hope it is not so with me, seeing God gives me a heart that pants after God, and Christ, in the way of commanded duty. The offers of salvation through Christ are made to all who believe and repent: and late penitents

are not excluded from the benefit of these gra-

Tempt 4. But saith the tempter, "Thou art none of God's elect, and if thou be not chosen

to falvation, thou canst not be faved."

Answ. Secret things belong to God, and it were prefumption in me to pry into his secret decrees; but one thing I am sure of, that every soul that is chosen to faith and repentance, is also chosen to salvation; but I trust God hath chosen me to the former, and therefore to the latter.

Tempt. 5. But saith the tempter, "You overvalue your graces and duties, and so they cannot be true and real."

Answ. But I count them all but loss and dung in comparison of Christ. I desire always to be deeply humbled under a sense of my sinfulness and unworthiness, and to abhor every motion that would carry me away from Christ and his righteousness, and would tempt me to rely on my graces or duties, or put them in the least in Christ's room.

Tempt. 6. "The issue of thy sickness may be death, and thou art not ready; for thou hast no

affurance of thy falvation."

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Anjw. A perfect certainty is not to be expected here; there will be still some questionings, some doubts and fears; but these I resolve not to indulge now, but to break through all, that I may embrace Christ, and be found in him. The desires of my soul are to Christ, and the remembrance of his name: and such, I believe, he will not suffer to perish. "I believe, Lord, help my unbelief."

Tempt. 7. "But thou art a stranger to the invisible world; how wilt thou adventure into that world of spirits, with which thou hast so

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little acquaintance?"

Answ. But Christ, who is my head and best friend, is no stranger to it; he is the Lord of that land, and provides mansions for all his people there; and he will receive every one of them home, and lodge them safely. "The spirits of just men made perfect," were once what my spirit now is; they were strangers to that world before they came to it, as well as I: but their head being in it, encouraged them to go to it: and now they rejoice in it as the kindly dwelling-place of all the saints.

Tempt. 8. "But thou art vile, and God is infinitely pure and glorious; how canst thou

think of approaching fo near to him?"

Answ. Though a weak eye be not able to look upon the sun, yet I hope to be fitted and strengthened for that glorious sight. Besides, God doth now appear to us in his Son Christ, where his infinite glory is pleasantly vailed so as the saints may behold him. These glorised souls above were once vile as well as others; but their Saviour did cleanse them, and present them to the Father without spot or wrinkle. And whatever be my unworthiness, I am relieved by considering my union with Christ, and looking on the glory and dignity of my head. Surely God will not despise the members of his dear Son, nor trample on any that are his stell and bones.

Tempt. 9. " But what will become of thy wife

and children, when thou art taken from them?"

Answ. If I trust God so willingly with my soul, and my eternal concerns, why may I not trust him with my relations also? Have I not seen how wonderfully he hath provided for others? Doth not every thing in the world depend on his will and pleasure? How easy is it then for God to supply his own?

Tempt. 10. "But still death is terrible to

nature, even the king of terrors."

Answ. But my Redeemer hath tasted death for me, and taken out its fearful sting; he hath conquered death, and keeps the keys of death and hell. Wherefore through him will I sing, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

Tempt. 11. "But it is terrible to think of appearing before God's tribunal, to be tried and

judged."

Answ But my friend annd intercessor will be the Judge there. Will Christ condemn the members of his own body, and these he hath so

often comforted;

But besides all these, a holy God may sometimes suffer the tempter to assault his own people in time of their affliction with his siety darts and his siercest battering engines, such as, temptations to Atheism, blasphemy, despair, &c. whereby their souls may be terribly shaken, and fore amazed.

Your relief in this case is to look to your head, and remember how he was himself buffetted by this enemy, assaulted with the most edious temptations, that he might thereby get

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an exerimental touch and feeling of your condition, in order to his sympathizing with you, and relieving you from this enemy, whom he hath already conquered in your name. But for these things he will be enquired of by the house of Isarel. You must act faith on your exalted head.

C H A P. IV.

Containing some special directions to unregenerate persons, when afflicted by sickness or otherwise.

DIRECT. I. Take a serious view of the of the miserable condition of a Christless person under sickness or heavy affliction.

your case, and that of a true believer; he hath ground of consolation in the greatest distress, but you have none. However sharp the rod of correction be to him, yet it is in the hand of a Father; but you have to do with an angry and sin-revenging God: and, who may stand in his sight, if once he be angry? for he commands both the first and second death, and he can cast you both into the grave and hell at once, Rev. vi. 8. "Hell followed the pale horse." Death is the king of terrors, but hell is a thousand times more terrible. When God afflicts his children, he stands to them in the relation of a loving Father; but he deals with you as an incensed judge. Though he sees it

necessary for 'their good to chastise them, yet he doth it with a relenting hand; yea, every stroke goeth as it were to his heart, Isa. lxiii.

9. "In all their affliction he was afflicted."
But when he ariseth to punish his enemies, he strikes them with hatred and detestation, as a man would do a toad or venomous creature. Though they cry, he hath no pity, Prov. i. 26.

"I will laugh at your calamity, and mock when

your fear cometh."

adly, If your fickness threaten you with death, what a dark and melancholy prospect must you have of your approaching change? Why, O Christless soul, it is what you are wholly unprepared for. The old house falls down about your ears, before you have another lodging provided. When death casts you to the door, you have not where to lay your head, unless it be on a bed of fire and brimstone. O how furprising and fearful will the change be, that death will make on you! A change from earth to hell, from light to darkness, from comforts to terrors, from hope to dispair, from the offers of grace to the revelation of wrath; a change from the fociety of faints on earth, to the company of the damned in hell. Whatever fond hopes of salvation you have now, your hopes shall lead you no further than to the king of terrors, and then "your hopes shall be cut off, and your trust like a spider's web," Job viii. 14. Though it cost you much pains to weave and support this web now, it will prove a weak and flender defence to your foul, when death comes with his besom of destruction, and

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fweeps both you and it away to hell. You will then be taken from all the means of grace you have abused, and be for ever deprived of an opportunity of buying oil: your lamp shall go out to death, and never be lighted any more.

adly, In this extremity, you have no airth to look to for comfort. O Christless sinner, what will you do in the day of visitation? To whom will you fice for help? Your houses, your lands, your money, your honours, your companions, your relations, will all be miferable comforters to you. Every thing will look black and difmal round about you. If you look without you for help, you may fee your friends weeping and lamenting your case; but this will do nothing but increase your vexation and misery. If you look within you for relief, conscience, that before you would not suffer to speak, will meet you with bitter stings and upbraidings. It will bring to your view the fins you had forgot, the time you have mispent, the health you have misimproven, the offers of grace you have refused, the great falvation you have neglected. what folly was it for thee to provoke God, and flight Christ, for a little worldly profit; or a little brutish pleasure? Can these relieve thee when the arrows of the Almighty stick within thee, and the terrors of God do let themselves in array against thy soul? In the mean time, the devil, that tempted you to your foul-ruining course, will step in, and represent your fins in their blackest colours and aggravations, to render you altogether topeless and desperate. O sinner, thou that resusest rest

from Christ in the day of health, and grace, shalt find no ease from the creature in the day of sickness and death. Your sickness will allow no rest to your body, and your sins will permit no ease to your soul. You may expect the sulfilling of that threatning, Deut. xxviii. 65.—67. "The Lord shall give thee a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind. And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee, and thou shalt have fear day and night. In the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even: and at even thou shalt say, Would God it were even: and at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning," because of the pain of thy body, and anguish of thy spirit.

DIRECT. II. Let unregenerate persons carefully improve their sickness and affliction, as means to further their conversion; and pray that God may bless it for that end.

MANY have begun their acquaintance with God, and with themselves in the time of affliction; the surnace is frequently the Spirit's work-house, where he forms his vessels of praise. There are many who, while health and strength continue, mind nothing but vain pleasures; one day they go to their games and sports, another day to their cups and lascivious company, another day to visiting their siends; and thus they spend the whole time of their health and prosperity in sin and vanity. All the warnings, counsels, and exhortations of parents, friends, and ministers, do them no good, they cannot endure to entertain a scrious

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thought of God or of Christ, of death, of heaven, of hell, or judgment to come. But when God doth cast them into sickness, or some great affliction, they, through the bleffing of God, begin to come to themselves, like the prodigal, and think of returning again to their Father. Several instances to this purpose might be given. The earl of Rochester is a late one, whose life was notoriously lewd, profane, and atheistical, and who had wickedly employed his wit and parts to ridicule all religion; yet when he was afflicted with pain and fickness, and brought to the gates of death, he began to entertain quite other apprehensions than he had done before; he professed he had serious and reverend thoughts of religion and holiness, which before he laughed at; he most earnestly and affectionately warned others to abandon their evil couries, and to live religiously and soberly, and to look upon religion as the greatest reality in the world; he retracted all his impious and profane language, wherewith he used to reflect on the ways of godliness, and willingly attested all this under his hand.

Pray then for the divine blessing on your sickness, that it may contribute to the conversion of your soul; which it doth several ways. 1st, By opening mens eyes to get a true sight of things, to behold religion in its true shape, and sin in its proper colours; hence the rod is said to give wisdom, Prov. xxix. 15. They who have mocked at religion, and made light of sin all their days, have been taught by bodily sickness to change their tune. Then they begin to

have an esteem of the Bible, and to value and send for a pious minister, and to desire the prayers of the people of God. Now they perceive sin to be bitter as gall and wormwood, they lothe and abhor that which they liked before; now the word of God makes deep impression on them, and particularly such a word as that, Jer. ii. 19. "Know therefore and see, that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast for-saken the Lord thy God."

2dly, Sickness helps to set the word preached home upon the heart. When God speaks to us in the day of health and prosperiy, we oft give him a deaf ear, Jer. xxii. 21. But when distress comes, it brings the words of God, and of his ministers, to our remembrance, as it brought Joseph's to the remembrance of his

brethren, Gen. xlii. 21.

adly, Sickness contributes to loose a man's heart from the world, and to cool his love thereto; whereby a great hindrance of conversion is removed out of the way, and the man is made to say, "How vain and helpless are the world's comforts to me now! these things I delighted in formerly are tasteless to me at this time. There is no portion can suit my soul's needs, but God himself."

athly, It spurs a man on to prayer that formerly neglected it. When the prodigal is brought to distress, he says, "I will arise and go to my Father." He forgat his Father before, but now he will address him, Hos. v. 15. "In their affliction they will seek me early." Thus the Lord frequently begins and promotes

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the conversion of souls to himself. And O sinner, if this be the fruit of thy sickness, it will not be unto death, but the glory of God.

DIRECT. III. Be careful to obey God's voice in the rod, and beware of slighting it.

L'very sickness hath a message from God, and his voice you ought to hearken to with reverence and attention, Micah vi. 9. What saith he to you at this time? O sinner, he seith, "Retire from the world, think on death and eternity, abhor these lusts and idols which God is smiting you for, slee speedily to the strong hold; repent, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." This is God's voice to you, and consider how provoking it will be to him, if you slight it.

voice when you cry to him, and stop his ear against the voice of your supplications, Zech.

vii. 13.

2dly, You will provoke God to cease from being a reprover to you, so that he will speak

to you, no more.

3dly, You will provoke him to bring heavier judgments on you, yea, so to draw his sword of justice against you, that he will sheathe it up no more, as he threatens, Ezek. xxi. 5.

athly, God may break off all intercourse and correspondence with you, as with those, Ezek. xx. 31. "As I live, faith the Lord God, I will not be enquired of by you."

not be enquired of by you."

5thly, He may seal you up for ever under

your fins, hardness, and pollution; and say to you, as to some we read of, Ezck. xxiv. 13. Hos. iv. 7. Rev. xxii. 11. "Because I have purged thee, and thou was not purged, thou shalt not be purged from thy filthiness any more, till I have caused my sury to rest upon thee. Ephraim is joined to his idols, let him alone. He that is filthy, let him be filthy still." He that is hardned against the voice of my rods, let him be hardned still. Well then, O sinner, while God is in speaking terms with you, hearken to his voice, and obey it; say, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

DIRECT. IV. Cast back your eyes upon the fins of your bypast life, and labour to be deeply humbled for them before the Lord.

C Eeing you are summoned to prepare for go-I ing to the judgment-feat of God, where your foul is to receive its final fentence; labour to prevent the terror of that appearance, by your judging yourfelf before-hand. And this you must do, by summoning yourself before the bar of conscience, examining narrowly into your state, accusing and condemning yourself for your fins. And fee that you be impartial in this work, willing to know the truth, and discover the worst of your case. You must see and be duly sensible of your danger, otherwife you cannot think to escape it. Take a narrow view of your fins in their nature, number, aggravations, and defervings. And in order to this, if thou hast any measure of

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strength for it, let the exposition of the ten commandments in our Larger Catechism be distinctly read over unto thee. Make a pause upon every question, and say within thyself, "Have I not omitted what is here required by God? and have I not committed what is here forbidden by God? how oft have I repeated these sins? how long have I lived in the practice of them? O! do not so many years sins need very serious repentance, a very deep humiliation? "O! doth not fuch a vile sinner as I, stand greatly in need of Christ to my cautioner and ransomer for such a vast number of sins? will not their weight press me eternally down to the lowest hell, if they remain unpardoned, and be laid upon my back?" Wherefore view them closely, and confess them particularly before God.

1st, In the first place, bewail thy original sin, the fountain of all thy actual transgressions, as did David, Psal li. 5. "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me."

adly, Acknowledge and mourn over the sinful outbreakings of thy life, whereby thou hast dishonoured God, and grieved his holy Spirit; and especially sins against light.

3dly, Be humbled for thy fins of omission, for neglecting of commanded duties, particularly for the neglect of prayer in secret, and of

family religion.

4thly, Mourn for the loss of precious time. Alas for the time of youth mispent, many Sabbath-days trifled away! 5thly, Lament thy long slighting of Christ, and salvation through his righteousness, which so pressingly hath been offered to thee in the gospel.

6thly, Bewail thy stifling the convictions, and quenching the motions of the Spirit, and there-

by provoking him to depart from you.

7thly, Mourn for thy unthankfulness to God for mercies and deliverances, which might have allured you to repentance and newness of life.

8thly, Confess thy stubbornness und erformer afflictions, which hath provoked God to send

new trials upon you.

othly, Be humbled for thy earthly-mindedness, in that thou hast all thy days been careful and cumbered about many things, and hast neglec-

ted the one thing necessary.

pentance, and thy prodigious folly in delaying fo long to bethink thyfelf, and turn to the Lord. "Oh how unwifely have I acted, to mispend the time of health, and delay so great a work till now, that I am laid on a sick-bed! and now, if I die before I am converted, I am lost for ever. O Lord, I am ashamed and confounded at my madness and folly, and have no excuse to plead for myself, but must stand afar off with the poor publican, and smite upon my breast, and cry, God be merciful to me a sinner."

DIRCET. V. Flee presently to Jesus Christ by a true faith, and close with him as offered to you in the gospel.

ART thou sensible, O sinner, of thy grievous guilt and ill-deservings before God?

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then yo not despair; for Jesus Christ, who bath offered to divine justice an all-sufficient sacrifice for fin. is offering himfelf to thee, faying, " 0 distressed sinner, look unto me, and be saved, Turn unto me, why will ye die? Come unto me, heavy laden foul, and I will give you reft. He that cometh to me, I will in no wife cast out." Will not fuch gracious words, fuch moving calls, melt thy heart within thee, and make thee cry to him, " Lord Jefus, I flee to thee as my refuge, for deliverance from fin, and protection from the wrath to come: Hook to thy wounds, I trust in thy righteousness, I depend on thy merit, I lie at thy feet, and this I am refolved to do as long as I have breath to draw in the world."

DIRECT. VI. Call for the elders of the church that they may pray over you in your sickness.

THIS is the apostle James his direction to the sick, James v 14. He doth not say, if any be sick, let him send for the physicians, but for the elders or ministers.

It is true, physicians are to be called, but not in the first place. It was Ata's fault that in his disease, he sought not the Lord, but to the physicians; and, alas, how many follow his example! Ministers are only called for in the last place, and very often when time is past, the sick being at the point of death, and scarce capable to speak or hear. But if you defire to reap benefit by the instructions and prayers of

ministers, call for them timeously, and open your case unto them; seek their counsel, and beg for their prayers. It is their office to teach and pray for you, and they have authority to offer salvation to you through Christ, and to minister comfort to them that are cast down; wherefore a blessing may be expected on their ministrations and performances more than others. Hence God said to Abimelech of Abraham, Gen. xx. 7. "He is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee." And to Job's friends concerning Job, Job xlii. 8. "Go to my servant Job, and he shall pray for you, for him will I accept: lest that I deal with you after your folly."

And Lastly, Remember, that as the apossle james enjoins the sick to call for the elders to pray over them, so at the same time he directs you, James v. 16 to confess your faults one to another, Christian to Christian, one friend to another, the people to their minister. Not that this gives any warrant for the Papists their auricular confession, which they force upon all men to their priests as a satisfaction for sin, and where they rack their consciences, (when they feel no distress,) to confess their most secret sins, to enumerate them all under pain of damnation, and which they use as a poli-

Beza, and many others of orthodox divines do teach, it is very profitable and necessary for these that are inwardly troubled with a sense of their sins, to ease and disburden their conscient

tic to dive into the secrets of princes, states, and all private persons: But as Luther, Calvin,

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ces, by confessing of them to the faithful ministers of Christ, in order to their receiving suitable counsels and consolations from them, such as Christ hath left in his word for contritehearted penitents.

Thus let every man in sickness use all appointed means for preparing his soul for a suture state. Thy preparation will by no means hasten death, but sweeten it to you. Death must surely have a most formidable aspect to an unprepared sinner: he may salute it as Ahab did Elijah, "Hast thou sound me, O mine enemy?" why? it brings heavy and doleful tidings to him. But a prepared soul may salute death, Welcome, O my friend, thou bringest me tidings of great joy; everlasting deliverance from sin, and all the bitter fruits of it. I shall never complain of these any more.

CHAP. V.

Containing directions to the people of God, when the Lord is pleased to recover them from sickness and destress.

DIRECT. I. It is very proper, both under sickness and after it, to examine if the affliction be sanctified to you, and hath come from the love of God.

It would be very comfortable for us to know that the afflictions which God visits us with, are not the punishment of a judge, but the chastisement of a father; that they do not proceed from wrath, but from love: that they

are not curses, but bleffings, to us. Now, the best way of knowing this is by the effects which they work and produce in us through the bleffing of God.

If, Canst thou say, that thy affliction hath humbled thee in the sight of God, and made thee confess and bewail thy sins and strayings from God as the procuring cause thereof? Hath it been like Moses's rod, that smote the rock, and fetched out much water? Did you water your couch with tears, and mourn humbly before God for all thy God-provoking sins? Then it is a good sign sickness is sanctified.

2dly, Doth thy affliction drive thee nearer God; and cause thee aim at closer communion with God in duty than formerly, saying, "However careless and overly I have been in duty in time past, it is surely good for me now to draw near to God?" Then thy sickness is a blessing to thee.

adly, Affliction is fanctified, when the corruption and deceitfulness of the heart is the more discovered and laid open to the view of the soul; so as the man is made to abhor himself in dust and ashes, and cry out as the leper, "Unclean, unclean." I never could have thought my heart was so wicked as now I see it.

4thly, It is a fanctified fickness, that purgeth the heart, and changeth the life, and gives a dead stroke to thy fins and idols, and makes thee to lothe and abhor them more than ever, saying, with Ephraim, "What have I to do any more with idols?"

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quickened and stirred up thereby, and the man turns more fruitful in holy duties and good works; when it is a budding and bloffoming rod, like to Aaron's, Numb. xvii. It is recorded there of Aaron's rod, that it brought forth buds, bloomed bloffoms, and yielded almonds. So it is happy with us, when our rods and ficknesses do produce in us, not only the buds of a profession, or the blossoms or some beginings of a reformation; but even cause us to yield almonds, fruit savoury to God. Is conscience become more tender with respect to fin? Are we more jealous over our hearts? Are we more fervent in prayer, more lively in praise, more mortified to the world, more desirous of communion with God? Then may we fay with David, "It is good for us we have been afflicted?" and with Hezekiah, "Thou hast, in love to my foul, delivered it from the pit of corruption."

DIRECT. II. Make conscience of offering to God the sacrifice of thanksgiving, upon his recovering thee from sickness or any distress.

THE Psalmist gives us this direction from God, Psal. 1. 14,15. and he shews us that it was his own practice in such a case, Psal. cxvi. 17. Psal. ciii. 1,2,3. &c. The command is just, let us obey it; the example excellent, let us imitate it. Praise is comely for the upright. Here I shall give some motives and advices.

ist, God, who is the author of all thy mercies and deliverances, gives you tongues for this very end, that you may bless and praise him for these mercies, James iii. 9. Hence

man's tounge is called his glory above the rest of the creatures, Pfal. lvii. 8. There is none in the creation so endued and qualified for praising God, as man is. Angels have reason and minds, whereby they adore and admire God's goodness and excellency, but have no tongues to praise him; beasts have tongues, but without speech or reason to use them: but man hath both reason and speech, that he may both admire God's goodness, and with his tongue found forth God's praise. See then, O believer, that you use your tongue to answer the end. of your creation. God loseth his due rent of praise from the rest of the world, but he expects. it from his children, whom he hath formed for this end, and on whom he bath bestowed many: distinguishing favours.

adly, The facrifice of thanksgiving is most pleasing and acceptable to God. He loves your tears and prayers, O believer, but much more your praises. How well pleased was our Lord with the poor leper Samaritan, that returned and gave him thanks for curing his bodily distemper? Luke xvii. He dismissed him with a special blessing, and cured him of his soul's diseases, as well as of his body's. And therefore,

3dly, Consider that thankfulness for thy mercies received is a most profitable course for ourself; for it is the way to get more and better blessings bestowed upon you, according to Psal. lxvii. 5. 6. "Let the people praise thee, O God. Then shall the earth yield her increase: and God, even our own God, shall bless us." Thanksgiving for former mercies is a kindly

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way of petitioning for new favours, and God will understand it in this sense.

of thanksgiving, that he honours it to be the eternal work of heaven. Whereas other graces, such as, faith, hope, and repentance, will then be melted into love and joy for ever, so other duties of worship, such as, reading, hearing, and prayer, will then be changed into that of praise and thanksgiving: the glorisied company above will never be weary of this work; and shall not we delight in it now, when God is calling us to it by so many new mercies?

In the next place, that thou mayest offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving to God for thy recovery, with gracious acceptance, I shall lay be-

fore you the following advices.

1. See that your heart be touched with a sense of the greatness of the mercy, and of the goodness of God manifested therein. We must put a due value upon our mercies, and have our hearts affected with God's kind dealing towards us in them, if we would be rightly thankful to God the author of them. Hence it was that David called upon his heart, and all within him, to bless the Lord for his benefits, Psal. ciii. 1.; and in Psal. exxxviii. 1. he saith, "I will praise thee with my whole heart." As in an instrument of music, the more sound comes out of the belly of it, it is the sweeter; so our praise is the more acceptable to God, when the heart is full of gracious affections.

2. Let your praise be the native result of faith and love in your soul, otherwise it will be

but an empty found. Faith is necessary to draw by the vail, and shew us the perfections of the invisible God, who is the spring and author of all our mercies; love gives a deep sense of his goodness, enlargeth the heart towards God, and opens the lips to shew forth his praise.

3. Study to have a deep sense of your own unworthiness and ill-deservings at the Lord's hand, upon the account of your sins, and ill-improvement of former deliverances, saying with Jacob, Gen. xxxii. 10. "I am not worthy

of the least of all thy mercies."

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4. Look above instruments and second causes, and do not ascribe your recovery to physicians or outward means, but to the Lord, the prime author of it, whose blessing alone it is that gives essimply and success to the appointed means, and by whose mercy only we are spared and brought back from the gates of the grave. To this the apostle attributes Epaphroditus his recovery, Phil. ii. 27. "Indeed he was sick night unto death, but God had mercy on him." Hence we are told, I Sam. ii. "The Lord bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up."

5. Observe narrowly the remarkable cir-

cumstances of the Lord goodness, and the sweet ingredients of thy mercies. As for instance, (1.) How discernable the Lord's hand was in thy deliverance, which obligeth thee to say, Surely this is the singer of God? this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in mine eyes. (2.) How thy deliverance came to thee as the return of prayer, makes thee say, Surely he is a prayer-hearing God. (3.) How deli-

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verances came when there was but little ground to hope for it. See how Hezekiah observed this ingredient in his recovery from fickness, Ifa. xxxviii. 10, 11. "I faid in the cutting off of my days, I shall go to the gates of the grave: I am deprived of the refidue of my years. I said, I shall not see the Lord, even the Lord in the land of the living: I shall behold man no more, with the inhabitants of the world." Verse 15. "What shall I say! he hath both spoken to me, and himself hath done it." Sometimes God fends deliverances to his people when they are most hopeless, and saying, with the captives in Bayblon, Ezek. xxxvii. 11. "Behold our bones are dried, and our hope is loft, and we are cut off for our parts." (4.) Remember how the extremity of thy diffress was God's opportunity of sending relief. Abraham never forgat the seasonableness of God's appearing for him in his extreme need upon mount Moriah, when he called the name of the place JEHOVAH JIREH, for preserving the memorial of it; "In the mount of the Lord it will be feen." So doth David, Pfal.cxvi. "I was brought low, and he helped me."

6. Let the present deliverance bring all former mercies to thy remembrance, that so thou mayest praise God for them all, whether they be national or personal mercies, public or private, spiritual or temporal. New mercies should revive the memory of the old, and all of them should come above-board at such a time; so doth the Psalmist direct, Psal. cv. 2. "Sing to the Lord, talk ye of all his wondrous works."

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And what he directs others to, he practifeth himself in such a case, Psal. cxvi. 12. " What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefites towards me?"

7. Be ready to communicate to others an account of the Lord's kind dealings towards you, and the sweet ingredients of his mercies; and particularly of his fending spiritual deliverance to your foul, as well as outward deliverance to your body, when he is pleased to do fo. And do this in order to recommend the service of God to others, and to engage andinvite them to affift you in bleffing and praising the Lord. We fee how David observed his foul-deliverances, Plal. cxvi. 7, 8. and declares his experience to others, Pfal. xxii. 22. "I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee." Pfal. lxvi 16. "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my foul."

Lastly, Remember always to give thanks for mercies to the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, as directed, Eph. v. 20. Your spiritual sacrifices are only acceptable to God, when you offer them up by Jesus Christ, 1 Pet. ii. 5. As we must seek all our mercies in Christ's name, so we must give thanks for them also in his name. He is the Mediator of our praises, as well as of our prayers. Believers have not one mercy, but what comes swimming to them in Christ's blood, and is the fruit of his death and purchase to them: and therefore he is to be owned and looked to in the receiving of every mercy. And as Christ is the only mediator for

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conveying bleffings and mercies from God to us, so he is the sole Mediator for conveying all our services and spiritual facrifices to God. God accepts of them only as they are perfumed by Christ's meritorious sacrifice, and potent intercession.

DIRECT. III. When the Lord is pleased to grant thee any signal mercy or deliverance from trouble, beware of forgetting the Lord's kindness towards thee.

Corgetting of God's remarkably kind providences is an evil we are naturally prone unto, when we are in a prosperous state. Hence it is that the Spirit of God gives so many cautions against it in his word; and the saints of God do fo folemnly charge their own fouls to beware of it, as in Pial. ciii. 2. "Bless the Lord, O my foul, and forget not all his benefits; who healeth all thy diseases, who redeemeth thy life from destruction." Forget not his benefits, but carefully preserve and treasure them up in thy memory. It was usual for faints under the Old Testament to set up some visible monument to remind them of God's fingular favours to them; they erected stones, and built altars, to be memorials of the mercies they received, and put names on the places for this end. Let all this teach you to guard against this evil of forgetting the Lord's kind providence in recovering you from fickness.

You are guilty of this evil, when you do not duly value the mercy, but let it pass as a turn of

common povidence. When you let the imprefsion of the mercy wear soon off your hearts;
when you make a bad use of it, or do not rightly improve it to God's glory, and your own
soul's good; when you do not put on new resolutions to walk more exactly, live more fruitsully, and serve God more holily and humbly:
then are you guilty of forgetting his benefits.

This is an evil most grievous and provoking to a good and gracious God, as is evident from the many heavy complaints he makes of his people for it, as in Judges viii. 34. Psal. lxxviii. 11. Psal. cvi.13. Wherefore watch and pray

against it.

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DIRECT. IV. Inquire after these fruits of rightecusness, which are the genuine effects of affliction in the children of God, who are duly exercised thereby.

THE apostle speaks of these fruits, Heb. xii.
11. as natively following upon sanctified afflictions, and a kindly exercise of spirit under them. And therefore it is your duty to inquire if they be produced in you.

of these fruits which is the product of sanctified trials. Job found it in himself on the back of his affliction, chap.xlii.6." Now I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." It would be happy, if we could find our hearts more soft and melting upon the view if sin, after we have been in the surnace of affliction.

2dly, Another fruit is the improvement of

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faith. The afflicted believer is taught to look to, and depend more upon God for help in time of need, and less upon the creature. He now sees that vain is the help of man in the day of calamity, and that God in Christ is the only proper object of the soul's trust. This was the fruit of the apostle's affliction, 2 Cor. i. 8, 9, 10. "We were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life. We had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God that raiseth the dead: who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver."

is one of the fruits of righteousness which sanctified affliction doth yield. How proud and losty was Nebuchadnezzar before he was afflicted, Dan. iv. 29, 30. But afterwards he is made to own God, and humbly submit to him as his supreme and incontroulable Sovereign, and to acknowledge, that these who walk in pride, he is able to abase, vers. 37. This was God's design in the various trials of his people Israel in the wilderness, Deut. viii. 16. "That he might humble thee, prove thee, and do thee good at thy latter end." See then, O beliver, if this fruit be produced in thee.

athly, Another fruit is the spirit of prayer and supplication. This was visible in the Psalmist's case, after God had delivered him from the sorrows of death, and heard his voice, Psalexvi. 2. "Therefore, says he, will I call upon him as long as I live." O, saith the true be-

liever, God's mercy to me in trouble, and his fending me relief when I cried to him, will make me love prayer the better, and engage me to be more diligent in it all my days; for I still see I have daily need of his helping hand.

tified affliction. Before the man was inclined to that language, It is good for us to be here, let us build tabernacles in this lower world, But now he turns his tongue, and changeth his thoughts, and faith, with the Pfalmift, "It is good for me to draw nigh to God. Arife let us depart, this is not our rest." This world is nothing but the house of our pilgrimage, heaven only is our home.

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greater love to God than formerly. How much was David's heart warmed with love and gratitude to God upon the back of his affliction, so that he wants words to express the affections of his soul? Pfal exvi. 1.8.12. "I will love the Lord because he hath heard my voice. I was brought low, but he helped me. Thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from failling.—What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits towards me?"

7thly, Learning and keeping of God's word is a fruit of fanctified affliction, Pfal exix. 67. 71. Let us enquire if this fruit be produced in us after fickness. Do we attend to the word more closely! do we believe it more firmly? do we embrace its offers more careftly? and do we live more in the expectation of that glory which the word doth reveal to us? "Then it is good

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for us we have been afflicted: for we have learned more of God's word."

8thly, Tenderness of conscience is a happy fruit of fanctified trouble; when the believer, after it, becomes exceedingly afraid of fin, and of making new wounds in his conscience. He cannot think of adventuring again upon any known fin; for the fmart of former wounds, and the pain they occasioned in his foul, when diftress lay upon him, makes deep and lasting impression on his mind, as it did on the afflicted church, Lam. iii. 19, 20. "Remember mine affliction, and my misery, the wormwood and the gall, my foul hath them still in remembrance, and is humbled within me " Now, fuch fruits of righteousness are an evidence we have been suitably exercised under affliction: O to find them produced in us after fickness is over,

DIRECT. V. Be careful to perform these resolutions, engagements, or vows, you have come under in the time of sickness; and walk suitably to them. (

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As a time of sickness and affliction is a proper season for making vows to God, and binding our souls with resolutions to mortify sin in the heart, and purge it away from the life, and to be diligent in duty, and walk more humbly with God; so a time of recovery from sickness is a proper season for paying and performing these vows. This was the royal Psalmist's practice in such a case, Psal. cxvi. 6, 16, 17, 18, 18 I was brought low, and he helped me. Truly

I am thy servant, I am thy servant. I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving. I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the prcsence of all his people." Now for your affistance in this matter, I offer you these few advices.

1st, Defer not to pay your vows, but be speedy, and take the first opportunity to pay them. Delays in this case are most dangerous; Solomon, that wise man, was sensible of this, which made him give thee this advice, Eccles. v. 4. "When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it,"

adly, Be still jealous of thy heart, which is prone to deal treacherously with God after affliction is over. The Itraelites practice is a fad instance of his truth, Pfal. lxxviii 34 6.c. "When he flew them, then they fought him, and they returned and inquired early after God, &c. Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues; for their heart was not right with him, neither were they stadfast in his covenant." The purposes of many in affliction are like the vows of mariners in a storm; they are the first things which they forget and break when once they win safe ashore. However penitent some feem to be in sickness, yet when they recover from it, they foon return to their old fins again. They are like metals in a furnace, they melt and turn liquid while in it, but when out, they foon return to their old hardness. There is good reason for that caution the Lord gives us, Mal. ii. 16. "Therefore take heed to your spirit, that you deal not treacherously."

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3dly, Cry continually for strength from above to enable you to perform your vows. The Psalmist took this course, and found it success. ful, Pfal. cxxxviii. 3. "In the day when I cried to thee, thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength, in my foul." And forget not O believer, that God has treasured up strength for thee in thy head and furety Christ Jesus; wherefore be still borrowing from him, for the performing of all thy engagements, 2 Tim. ii.1. " My fon, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." Put thy treacherous heart in thy Surety's hand; for though thou art weak, yet thy Redeemer is strong. Whenever then you first perceive your heart begin to start afide from God, be fure to check it, and look up to God in Christ for strength to secure it against treachery and perfidious dealing: ciy with the Pfalmist, "Be surety for thy servant for good."

4thly, Guard diligently against thy predominant sin, the sin that hath most easily beset thee, the sin that was most bitter and uneasy to thee in the day of distress. Keep a narrow eye upon it now; for if once that sin be got vanquished, the rest

will the more eafily be put to flight.

and on the condition thou wast in when they were taken on, and study to keep alive in thy heart the same apprehension of things after sickness which thou hadst in the time of it. How vain and comfortless did the world and its vanities then appear to thee! how awful were the truths of God on thy spirits! how far

preferable was the loving-kindness of God to thee than life! how precious was Christ then in thy eyes! O that your judgment, thoughts, and impressions of these things, may continue still the same!

6thly, Keep up the impressions of the preciousness of time, that you may diligently improve it; and shake off sloth and idleness. Remember what a view you got in the time of fickness, of long-lasting eternity; and what a trouble it was to you to look black, and fee how much time you had loft in fin and vanity. When fometimes we are brought to the brink of cternity, the near views we then get of its valtness and unchangeableness, are sometimes so awful and amazing to us, that we are ready to think, though we had Methusalem's years to live, it would be unreasonable wilfully to mispend one hour of them all. Well then, is fickness over, our time so short, and so little of it remaining behind? will we be so foolish, as to be lavish of it still, and trifle it away as before?

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whether of omission or commission, that made death to look grim and ghastly upon you in the time of sickness, and against which you resolved; and see to get every one of them amended and removed. Remember and consider how sad it will be for you, if sickness find you again in the very same sins which formerly stung you. What will you say to conscience, when it shall challenge you? How will you look death in the face, if it should find you living in the very same sins you formerly mourned for, and

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promised against! Death would then be the king

of terrors to they foul indeed.

O then, mind thy vows, and say with the Psalmist, Psal. lvi. 12, 13. "Thy vows are upon me, O God: I will render praises to thee. For thou hast delivered my soul from death; wilt not thou deliever my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living?"

CHAP. VI.

Containing directions to the unregenerate, when they are recovered from sickness, and restored to health.

DIRECT. I. Seeing the afflictions of the wicked are unfanctified, it is necessary you examine what fort of affliction yours hath been, and what fruits it hath produced in you.

I HAVE in the preceding chapter shewed, that the afflictions of believers are fatherly chastissements proceeding from love; that they are sanctified, and yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness. I have given the marks of sanctified afflictions, and mentioned the happy fruits which they produce in the children of God.

On the other hand, it is necessary to let Christless persons know, that their afflictions are of a different kind; they are even punishments from God as a judge, proceeding from wrath: they are unsanctified to them, and produce no fruits, but what are bitter and unsavoury.

Well then, O Christless soul, thou hast reafen to suspect the worst concerning thy sickness, that it hath not been fanctified, and its fruits are not good. O then, labour to know the the truth of the matter, that thou mayest be humble under a sense of thy misery, and slee to Jesus Christ for relief. And for thy assistance in this inquiry, I will give some marks of unsanctified afflictions.

1st, If sickness hath not humbled thee under a sense of thy sins, the procuring cause thereof, nor any wise hath weakened sin in thee, nor reclaimed thee from it, but it remaineth in thee as strong as ever; it is a sign thy affliction is unsanctified. This was the case of those of whom God complaineth, Jer. ii. 30. "In vain have I smitten your children; they received no correction." As if he had said, The physic I gave them did not purge out sin; nor weaken corruption in the least. They have been stricken, but not grieved for sin; the fire hath burnt round about them, but they have not laid sin to heart, that kindled the slame.

adly, It is a mark of unfanctified affliction, when it hath no influence upon a finner to bring him to a serious communing with his own heart concerning the estate of his soul, and to inquire in what terms he stands with God that afflicts him. God's voice by affliction is that in Hag. i. 7. "Now consider your ways." In the day of adversity consider where you are, what you are, what you are, what you have done, and what is the meaning of the rod, and what will be the issue of it through eternity, in case it hath a commission to cut the thread of life. Now, when a man remains stupid and careless about

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these important matters, and never noticeth the voice of affliction, so as to inquire seriously about his soul's condition; "Am-I under a covenant of works, or a covenant of grace? Am I a child of God, or an enemy of God? Have I fled to the city of refuge, or am I still in a shelterless state? Am I still under a cloud of wrath, or am I brought under the banner of love?" I say, where there are no such inquiries, the affliction is unsanctified.

3dly, It is a certain fign of unfanctified affliction, when a person grows worse by it, and revolts the more he isstricken, like these, Isa. i. 5.

Quest. When may it be said, that a person

grows worse by affliction?

Answ. 1. When the sinner's heart turns harder than it was before: so every plague on Egypt, increased the plague of hardness in Pharaon's heart. It fares with many hearts, as with iron that is often heated in the fire, and quenched in the water, it still increaseth in hardness.

2. When a person giveth way to impatience and murmuring against God while he afflicts him.

3. When the lusts of the heart grow more strong and impetuous, and afterwards rage the more, that they have been stopt in their course by affliction. In such cases a person grows worse by the rod.

DIRECT. II. Consider the great danger of no being bettered by sickness, and of not complying with the voice of God's rod.

GOD's voice by his rod doth loudly call fin ners to repentance, and fleeing to the Lor

Jesus Christ for resuge from wrath. Now, when this voice is not hearkened to, but men go on in their secure and sinful course as before, God is highly provoked, and the issue will be terrible. For,

ible. For,

1st, Though sickness be removed, and the furnace of affliction be cooled for the time;

yet the wrath that kindled it, continues still to burn. And you have ground to fear lest you be ranked among these who are the generation of God's wrath, against whom he

will have indignation for ever.

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adly, If leffer rods do not awaken you, you may expect greater and forer judgments are coming on you. Yea, God may cause them to come rolling thick upon you, as waves and billows in a storm, one upon the neck of another. The great depths, both above and below, may be opened together; the displeasure of God, and wrath of men, may conspire and meet to pour out themselves as water-spouts upon you at once: and to whom then will ye look for help?

3dly, The Lord may give over dealing with you, or using any further means to reclaim you; he may refuse to correct you any more, or bestow a rod upon you for your good, and say of you, as of Ephraim, Hos. iv. 17. " Ephraim is joined to his idols, let him alone."

4thly, The Lord may give you up to spiritnal plagues and judgments; and indeed this commonly is the result of obstinacy and incorrigibleness under outwards rods. When Israel
would not hearken to God's voice, he gave
them up to their own hearts lusts, Pial. lxxxi.

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11, 12. Now, these plagues are the severest of all others. External judgments are God's rods. but spiritual judgments are his swords, which pierce the very foul. Blindness of mind. hardness of heart, searedness of conscience, vile affections, and a reprobate sense, are the very foregunners of hell and damnation. These who are impenitent and unfruitful under outward afflictions, have cause to tremble lest God be provoked to inflict these spiritual judgments.

sthly, Be affured, though God spare you long, vet the glass of his forbcarance will at length run out. God's patience towards sinners hath a term and bound, over which it will not pass. 10 The time will come, when a long-suffering God day will at last say, " My Spirit shall no longer 101 strive;" and the angel will cry, as in Rev. xiv. 7. "The hour of God's judgment is come." You that abuse God's patience, and presume upon it, his treaty of peace will end with you in a little, and the master of the house will rise up and shut to the door. Then patience will come down, and justice will ascend the stage, and trample upon, and triumph over, all that abuse divine patience. Sodom was a wonder of God's patience for a long time, but now it is a lasting monument of his anger.

6thly, If you be not bettered by God's ods or sparing mercies, then your preservation at present will be nothing but a reservation for the day of God's wrath. And the longer your cup of fin is a filling, the fuller shall the cup of God's wrath be for you: by your impenitence and abuse of God's patience, you treasure up wrath 0

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or yourselves against the day of wrath, Rom. 4.; and though you be delivered from some udgments, you are referved for worse, yea, even times worse, according to Lev. xxvi. 23, 4. Nay, there is a ruining blow defigned gainst you, both soul and body, assoon as your the ap is full; and the axe is already laid to the not of the tree, Matth. iii. 10. One blow of God's axe will cut you off for ever.

Remember this, O finner, though God's hand e lifted off you at present, and his messenger eath be for a little recalled, yet he will quickly eturn, and knock so loud at your door, as not be refused. And what will you do in the day of visitation? how ghastly must the pale porse be, when hell follows him at the heels? And how hot and fiery must that hell be, which inflamed and blown up by fo long impenience, and abuse of patience?

DIRECT. III. Wonder at the patience of God in sparing such hell-deserving sinners as you are, and be thankful for it.

[] ATH a long-suffering God preserved the I thread of your life, when it was almost snapt funder by the violence of sickness? hath he freed you from racking pains, under which you were groan ig? nay, faved you from the grave and hell, into which you were falling? and have you not cause of wondering and thanksgiving? To move you to it, consider these few things.

ift, How miserable had you been through all sternity, if your sickness had carried you off to

another world in your fins? You had been howling with damned spirits, under endless and caseless torments, and for ever cut off from these hopes and offers of mercy you now have, Then the master of the house would have had the door so barred against you, as it could never have been opened again to you, knock as

you would, Luke xiii. 25.

adly, Consider how heavily you had burdened his patience with your heinous fins, and frequent relapses thereinto: and that after convictions, calls, and various rods fent to reclaim you: so that he was put to fay, as in Amosii, 13. " Behold, I am pressed under you, as a cart is pressed that is full of sheaves." He was overburdened with your fins, so that the axel-tree of patience was ready to break, and let you fall into hell; and yet, behold he bears with you still.

3dly, Confider how foon he could have eafed himself of the load, and shaken you off into the pit of destruction. In a moment could he have done it, and yet he bears many years with your fins that are so grievous to him. Yea, it is with a fort of reluctancy that he eases himself of sinners, after he gets the utmost provocation, lia. i. 24. "Ah! I will ease me of mine adversaries."

. 4thly. How ready is he to turn away his anger, and reprieve finners from destruction, when in their distress they make but a shew of repentance, and turning unto God! as we see in Psal. lxxviii 36, 38. He, like a tender-hearted prince, calls back the warrant for their execution, after it was gone forth.

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pel the gibly, Consider how much many Christless sinners are beholden to Jesus Christ for sparing mercy. He is represented by the dresser, Luke xiii. interceeding that the fruitless fig-tree might be spared and tried some time longer, after orders given to cut it down. Were it not for for Jesus Christ, O sinner, however much you forget and slight him, you had surely been in hell long ere now. How oft doth he obtain another year, and after that another, for the unfruitful sinner, and unthankful abusers of divine patience!

6thly, Consider how sparing mercy hath distinguished you from many others, who lived not so long, nor sinned so much as you have done. God hath wounded the hairy scalp of many, and taken them away in their youth; when he hath continued you to manhood, and perhaps to old age; though your sins and ill-deservings be greater than these of many, on

whom he hath long fince taken vengence.

God hath left many also tossing and groaning on beds of pain, when he hath eased and raised you up. O then, return like the thankful leper, and magnify the God of your health. Hath God distinguished you from others, by his goodness? It becomes you to distinguish yourselves from others, by your thankfulness. O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness! undeserved and distinguishing goodness!

To move you to this, let me fet the exampel of Hezekiah before you, Isa. xxxviii. and there see how thankfully and affectionately he

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remembered the Lord's mercies in recovering and delivering him from the bitter affliction he had been under. "I faid, I am deprived of the refidue of my years, I shall behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world. Like a crane or swallow, so did I chatter; I did mourn as a dove. Behold, for peace I had great bitterness; but thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption. The living shall praise thee, as I do this day." Yea, he was so overcome with a sense of the Lord's patience and mercy towards him; that he is at I loss how to express it, verse 15. "What shall a fay? He hath both spoken unto me, and himself hath done it."

Let all who are recovered from sickness, study to imitate that good king in holy admiration and thankfulness to the God of their life.

DIRECT. IV. Study to improve the sparing mercy and goodness of God to you in a right and suitable manner.

O Sinner, hath God brought you back from the gates of death, and brink of hell, restored you to health, and given you a new offer of mercy and salvation through Christ in a preached gospel, which you formerly despised. Strive now to improve the Lord's patient and kind dealings towards you with the utmost care, and abuse his patience no longer. And to order thereto, take the following counsels.

I. Be deeply humbled for your former ob stinacy and impenitency, notwithstanding of

God's gracious and patient dealing. O let the foaring mercy and goodness of God towards thee lead thee to repentance, which is the native design of it, according to Rom. ii 4. " Defoilest thou the riches of his goodness, forebarance, and long-fuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" Asif he had faid, "Dost thou not fee, O man, the kind providence of God in sparing and recovering thee from sickness, taking thee by the hand, and pointing out to thee to go to thy closet to mourn and weep for all thy bypast fins, and particularly for thy mispending the the time of health, and abusing of the Lord's patience?" The confideration of David's goodness and forbearance towards Saul, melted Saul's heart, for as hard and rugged as it was, and made him to lift up his voice and weep, and fay to David, I Sam. xxiv. 17. &c. "Thou art more righteous than I; for thou haft rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil. And thou hast shewed this day, how that thou hast dealt well with me; for as much as when the Lord had delivered me into thine hand, thou killedst me not. For (fays he) if a man find his enemy, will he let him go well away?" Oh far more reason hast thou, O man, to weep and cry, "God hath found me his enemy, yea in my enmity and fins, fighting against himself; he had me on a fick-bed, and on the very brink of hell, and the least touch of his hand would have thurst me in: but yet he hath spared his enemy, and let me go well away. Oh, will not these P 2

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cords of love draw me, and this matchless goodness invite and hire me to repent? Can any consideration in the world be more powerful than this to melt my hard heart into tears of holy shame and sorrow for my stiff-neckedness and rebellion against a gracious and long-suffering God? Away with these cursed God-provoking sins of mine! down with these weapons of rebellion! let me never list them more against

fuch a merciful Sovereign!"

11. Zealofly improve the time, which God in his long-fuffering hath lengthened out to you, in working out the falvation of thy foul. Have you so long been loading the patience of God with your sins? have you many a day been grieving his holy Spirit, by trifling away your time, flighting his motions, and venturing on fins against light? O then, beware of burdening his patience any more; but diligently hearken to every motion of God's Spirit, and of your own conscience, for the time to come. You have much work to do, and but little time to do it in; therefore lay hold on every opportunity for carrying it on. The confideration of the much time you have already lost and mispent, should make you the more diligent in what remaineth. How much of it have you lost in youth? how much in ignorance? how much in negligence? how much in worldliness? how much in pastimes? how much in idle words? how much in actual fins and provocations against God! and now it may be near the evening of your day. And will you not fpend the evening (which God is mercifully lengthening out) with extraordinary care and diligence? If a traveller lose the beginning of the day, he must travel the faster in the evening, otherwise he may fall short of his journey, and have his lodging to seek when night comes. Paul had mispent much of the beginning of his life; and this consideration (when his eyes were opened) did stir him up to be the more diligent in the service of God, so that he was more zealous than any of the rest of the apostles. O man, follow his example, and trise no longer in the work of God. Art thou not convinced thou hast squandred away enough of this precious treasure of time already? And wilt thou also mispend and throw away the little that remains? Oh! be not so sooish.

III. Be careful to raze all false foundations, and build your hopes of falvation, upon the only fure rock, Jefus Chrift. Let it not discourage thee to dig to the foundation, that so much of thy day is lost; for it is better to do it late than never. Remember how miserable is the condition of that house which is built upon the fand. Matth. vii. 27. " For when the flood comes, and the storm ariseth, and beats upon it, great, and dismal will the fall of that house be." Do not build your hopes of heaven upon God's abfolute mercy, upon your convictions, upon your freedom from gross sins, upon your prayers or tears, upon your morality and just dealings with men: though these be necessary and excellent in themselves, yet they are falle foundations for to build the hopes of your justification and sal-vation upon, seeing they are wholly insufficient

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to bear such a weight. However much these things have been esteemed and valued by you formerly, in the matter of justification; yet if you resolve to be a wise builder, you will let them all now go, yea, count them all but loss and dung, that you may win Christ, (our only hope) build on him alone, and be found in him, not having on your own righteousness, which is but

filthy rags.

Well then, raze and tear up every falle foundation, did deep, till you win to the rock Christ. Dig deep into the holy law and nature of God; dig till you see the infinite strictness of divine justice, the unspeakable evil that is in fin, the hidden vileness and abominations of the heart, your own inability to do any thing for your help and relief. Dig yet further, till you fee the infinite fulness and freeness of God's grace in Jesus Christ, that suitable remedy that answers all a poor finner needs. Dig deep, anddig on, till you win to this rock; let your cry be still to God, Lord, lead me to the rock Chrst, and his all-sufficient righteonshess only. Act faith upon this rock, rely on it, boild all your hopes on it, and fay, " This is my new for ever, here will I dwell, for I have defined it. Lord, the define of my foul is only to Christ, and to the remembrance of his name. His name is as ointment poured forth; therefore dothe virgins love him."

IV. If you would rightly improve the sparing mercy and goodness of God, let it lead you to repentance and reformation of life. Turn from all these sins, whether of omission or commission, now in the day of health, which con-

science challenged you for in the time of sickness. Mind Christ's caution and warning to healed sinners, John v. 14. "Behold thou art made whole; sin no more, lest a worse thing befal thee." O let sin die with thy sickness; and do not relapse into thy former security and sinful ways. Beware of returning with the dog to thy vomit, and like the sow that is washed, to the wallowing again in the mire of thy former sins and uncleannesses; lest being entangled and overcome again with the silthiness which thou now hast escaped, thy latter end prove worse than thy beginning.

Lastly, And to sum up all I shall say in this chater, be careful to re deem time, and active in providing for an eternal state. O prize and value the mercy of health and strength more than ever. Sympathize with these who are still lying on sick-beds, and under languishing distempers; neglect not to pity and pray for them. Remember the destressed case you were in yourselves, when you had no rest in your bones, when wearisome nights were appointed to you, and you were full of tossings to the dawning of the day. Consider how slippery is your standing. Though the late storm of trouble be over, yet the clouds will return after rain.

CHAP. VII.

Containing directions to those sick persons, who are apparently in a dying condition, and drawing near to another world.

I HAVE already, in the first, third, and fourth chapters, given several directions concern-

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ing our submission to the will of God, making preparation for death, calling for ministers, edifying others by our discourse, settling our worldly affairs, &c. which are very proper for dying persons; and therefore I shall not repeat them, but proceed to speak of other things. Only let me add this word, if you have hitherto neglected to make your wills, settle your worldly affairs, send for ministers to discourse with, and pray over you; delay it no longer, but do it speedily, while you have the use of your reason and understanding. And what I have more to say, take it in the following directions.

DIRECT. I. Consider when death stares you in the face, that now is the time, if ever, to exert the utmost activity in preparing to meet with it.

A LAS, it is to be regretted that the most part II of men neglect their fouls, mispend their life, misimprove their health, and leave undone the work for which they were created, preferved, and enjoyed the gospel. Surely a near prospect of death and judgment cannot but be uneasy to such persons. What a melancholy thought must it be for a dying man, "Oh! I had all my time given me to make preparation for endless eternity: and alas, I never minded it till now, that I must leave the stage of this world. Is there any hope for such a careless and miserable sinner?" I acknowledge the case is sad, but yet it is not remediless nor desperate; feeing there is a facrifice provided for your fins, and there is an all-sufficient Saviour in your offer,

who never did cast out any humbled soul, that came to him for mercy. You have great reafon indeed to abhor and condemn yourself before God, for your fin and folly; yet despair not, but believe, whatever be your fins, your dangers, your fears, and temptations, that Jesus Christ is both able and willing to fave to the uttermost all that come to God by him; and that his grace aboundeth more than your fin aboundeth. O how glad would devils and damned fouls in hell be, if they were but in your case, and had your offers and hopes! how diligently would they improve the time of mercy! O be persuaded then to spend the little time that now remains with the utmost care, in making penitent confession of sin to God, and applying the blood of Christ for pardon. Nay, even the best of God's people have need to be diligent at this time, in making actual preparation for dying. God is now faying to you, as Johnah did to the Ifraelites, John i. 11. " Prepare you victuals, for within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land which the Lord your God giveth you." Lay in provision for your passing over this Jordan of death: you know not how rough the paffage may be.

Ishall give some motives to press this diligent and active preparation; and therefore con-

fider.

1st, The short time of your life that remains is all the time you have for working out your salvation. What you do for attaining heaven, and avoiding hell, must be done now or never;

for there is no work nor device in the grave whither thou goest, nor is there any coming back to this world to amend what hath been amis. Dying is a thing you cannot get a trial of, it is what you can only do once, and no more, Heb. ix. 27.

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adly, Be diligent now; for as foon as death gets commission to cut you off, it will execute it: it will not spare you, nor allow you one minute more time to prepare for eternity. The most merciles enemies have sometimes been overcome by the prayers and tears of fuch as on their knees do beg a little more time to prepare for another world; and do hearken to their requests: but this enemy, death, will not grant one moment's respite.

3dly. Consider that your eternal state and condition will be according to the state in which you die. Death will open, the doors either of heaven or hell to you, in one of which you shall take up your eternal abode. As the tree falls at death, fo will it lie through eternity.

4thly, Consider what a serious and awful matter it is to die, and go into another world, for then you will have immediately to do with God your judge; there will be no vail then betwixt him and your foul. You will then enter into a world of spirits, wherewith you are so little acquainted: you are frighted now to go into a room alone, that is faid to be haunted by a spirit; how frightful then must the case of those be, who are hurried into a world of spirits, not knowing but devils must be their companions for ever! Surely then it is your interest to give all diligence now, to make your acquaintance with the Lord of that world, before you enter

into it.

foul now; for, to be fure, Satan will put forth his utmost against it. If thou be in a Christless state at this time, he will use all his efforts and stratagems to keep thee from Christ; either by statering thee that thy state is good, thereby to sull thee assept in sin and security; or by telling thee, it is out of time to help matters with thee, thereby to drive you into despair. The devil will leave no method unattempted to ruin thy soul, when death is near: for he knows his time is short; and if he catch not the soul then, he will never get it: and neither can he hurt it hereaster; for if once it enter heaven, he can trouble it no more.

If thou art a believer in Christ. Satan thy malicious enemy will not fail to attack thee, at this time, with all his might; for though he may know he cannot keep thee out of heaven, yet he will labour to render thy passage towards it, as dark, tempestuous, and uncomfortable as possibly he can. But it is the believer's happiness, this cruel enemy is under a strong chain, and cannot do all he would; for Jesus Christ is the good shepherd that hath undertaken for all his sheep. Nevertheless, by his wife permission, this adversary may sometimes give great diturbance to a dying saint; which calls thee to the greatest diligence and watchfulness at this time. It is the observation of one, that as the devil is most busy at the conclusion of a duty, as

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of prayer, that the Christian may be most difturbed and distracted, when he is to close up all in the name of Christ, and so all his desires be frustrated: fo he is most busy in the conclusion of our days, and when death is at hand, feeking by temptations, distractions, and false imaginations, to do us all the mischief he can, and all because he knoweth his time is short; according to that word, Rev. xii. 12. "The devil is come down, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a fhort time." He may fitly be called, the wolf of the evening, mentioned in Jer. v. 6., in regard he comes forth most fiercely in the evening of mens lives, to fet upon their precious fouls. Yea, so busy is he sometimes with believers under dangerous fickness, feeking to overthrow their faith and affurance, that it is the observation of a good man, that he seldom seeth a sick faint, followed close with temptations, recover of that fickness; for Satan, knowing he hath but little time, proves as uneasy to him as he can. Hence that great man of God, Mr Knox faid, when he came to die; " In my lifetime, the devil tempted me to despair, casting my fins in my teeth; but now, in my sickness, he tells me, I have been faithful in the ministry, and so have merited heaven: but bleffed be God, who brought these texts into my mind, Not I, but the grace of God in me: What hast thou that thou hast not received?" The children of Israel had pever fuch hot work from their enemies, as when they just came to enter into the promised land.

What need then hast thou, O believer, to be diligent in thy preparations on a dying bed to quicken grace, put forth thy utmost strength, bring all the assistance thou canst from the Captain of thy salvation, when thou hast such a cruel enemy to encounter with! Now is the time for action, though yet it will be your wisdom to leave as little to be done at this time as possible.

DIRECT. III. Continue to the last in the exercise of true repentance and humiliation for sin.

Dossidonius, who wrote the life of Augustine, faith, that he heard him often fay in his health that repentance was the fittest disposition both for dying Christians and ministers; and for himself, that he died with tears in his eyes, weeping for fin. When death approacheth nearest, we should thus stir up ourselves to give sin the most deadly blow of any we have given it all our life. As it is most laudable to die forgiving finners that have wronged us, so also taking revenge upon fin that hath injured a gracious God. The apostle tells us, 2 Cor. vii. 11. that indignation and revenge attend true repentance. Wherefore, as Samuel took vengeance on Agag a little before his death, and Moses (at God's command) avenged the children of Israel of the Midianites just before he was gathered to his people, Num. xxxi. 2. and dying Samfon gave the most fatal blow to the Philistines of any he had given them before; lo a dying Christian should take the severest re-

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venge on fin at last, which hath so oft through his life dishonoured God, pierced Christ, a grieved his holy Spirit. It is the last opportunity you will have to shew your indignation at it, and therefore do it effectually.

Again, confider it is old fins unmourned for that many times keep believers so much in th dark, when they come to die. These do rail many thick clouds about their evening-fun, an hinder them from going off the stage with such comfortable affurance of God's love as other wise they might attain to. These did ver much hinder Job's peace and settlement, inth day of affliction, as he complains, Job xiii 26 "He makes me to posses the iniquities of m youth." It is a fad thing when young in and old bones meet together. O that your people would mind this in time! you are do ing that now which will abide with you to age if not to eternity. Sin must be bitter som time or other, for God calls it a root that bear gall and wormwood, Deut. xxix 18. Ifrae could not have peace nor fuccess while there wa an Achan in the camp; fo neither can you have confolation or affurance while any fin lies un reckoned for in the conscience. Make thorough fearch then into old fins, and mour over them. We find Paul frequently calling over the fins of his life, and even these he wa guilty of before conversion; "I was injurious a blasphemer," &c. whereby he maintaine much inward peace and confolation. Be oft look ing back to old fins, with inward forrow an faith in Christ's blood, if you would have death-bed easy and soft to you.

IRECT. III. Be mindful of all acts of justice and charity, which may be incumbent upon you at this time.

T is great wildom in men to fettle their worldly affairs in the time of health, that fo eir minds may be free for spiritual exercises, nd not disturbed with earthly cares and busies when they come to a dying bed; but if this ath been neglected hitherto, it must not be mitted now. I have given directions about it, hap. I. direct. 6 fo that I shall fay little here; mly be careful to do justice to every man, as meh as in you lieth; and particularly, 1. By naking a just and rational provision for your vife and children. 2. By ordering payment of Il your just debts, without defrauding any of our lawful creditors. 3. By making restituion, in case you have wronged any man. If uffice be not done in these matters, how can your fouls be difburdened of guilt?

In the next place, forget not the acts of charity, which God requires of all the profes-

fors of the gospel.

ist, Seek reconciliation with your neighbours, where any difference or mistakes have fallen in; that so you may die in peace and charity with

all about you.

adly, Be ready from the heart to forgive these that have done you any wrong. If the natural sun should not go down upon our wrath, much less should the sun of our lives. If you carry an unforgiving spirit with you, into another world, how can you expect to meet with a for-

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giving God there; when he hath exprelly declared, Matth. vi. 15. "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses?" O then, imitate your glorious Saviour, and his martyr Stephen, who at their death begged mercy from God, for those that mortally heated them, Luke xxiii. 34. Acts vii. 60.

adiy, If the Lord hath given you fubstance, honour the Lord with it, by leaving some part of it to the poor, and to pious uses. I have pressed this once and again before; but I mention it frequently, because it is much forgotten by dying persons in our age. Remember, it is not left arbitrary to you to give or not, as you please: no. for God doth charge it upon you as a duty, yea, a debt that you owe him, 1 Tim vi. 17, 18." Charge them that are rich in this world, &c. that they do good, be rich in good works, ready to distribute." And he pronounceth them bleffed who consider the poor, Pfal. xli. 1. I grant that people are not to leave all their works of charity to a death-bed; thefe should also be minded in our lifetime, so as to make our own hands our executors, and our own eyes our overfeers of our charitable projects: but furely it is a proper feafon for shewing charity to God's poor, when we are leaving them, and cannot have occasion for shewing it more. Remember what is recorded of Dorcas after her death, Acts ix 36. that she was a woman full of good works and alms-deads. And her friends, verf. 39. shewed the effects of her charity to Peter after her death. All which is written for our example

and admonition, that we may be rich in such good works, that our friends may have them to show after our death. Surely it is a sign of the degeneracy of this age, and that religion is on the declining hand, when people generally sall so short of the zeal and piety of their fathers in his matter.

4thly, It would be a commendable work of charity in dying persons, to be giving many good counsels to their relations and children, and to be putting many fervent prayers to God for them. So Chrift, when near to death, committed his spiritual children to his Father, and earneftly begged his protection and care of them, John xvii. 11. I' I am no more in the world, but these are in the world: keep them through thy name, keep them from the evil," &c. In like manner, cry to God for your children: "Lord, thou hast graciously given them to me, I now restore them back to thee .-They are born to me once, O that they may be born to thee a second time! I am leaving them in the midst of snares and temptations, 0 that it may be their happiness to be the preserved in Christ Jesus! Keep them by thy power through faith unto salvation. O take them within the bond of thy covenant, and be thou their Father, to protect, direct, and provide for them. Give them a name in thy house better than of sons and daughters, that I may meet with them at thy right hand with everlasting joy."

Lastly, Be suitably concerned also for the whole church of Christ, and especially for these

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that are in affliction, that God may loofe their bonds, send them liberty and prosperity in his due time, "Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion, build up the walls of thy Jerusalem. Peace be within her walls, and prosperity within her palaces."

DIRECT. IV. Labour what you can to overcome the love of life, and fears of death: that you may attain to willingness to die, and leave the world when God calleth you to it.

TT is no wonder that a wicked man, or one I that hath no interest in Christ, be unwilling to die: why; he is affrighted with the guilt of past sins, and the fears of future torments; and it is impossible to be rid of these till he become a true believer in Christ. No man hath ground to welcome death but the believer; yet it is to be regretted, that so many of them should appear unwilling to leave this world, which is nothing to them but a wilderness and weary land. Lot's foul was vexed and troubled in Sodom, and yet he was loth to leave it; fo some believers, when called to leave a vexing world, do shew much hankering towards it, and linger behind. This proceeds partly from nature, which dreads a diffolution, and partly from the weakness of grace. But O let all God's children labour to overcome this aversion, and go forth to meet death half-way, and bid it welcome. And for their help in this matter, I shall lay before them the following arguments.

ift Consider how little reason a believer hath

to be much in love with this present life. 1. It is a finful life; fin dwells in your nature, breaks out in your life, and pollutes all your duties. How oft have youg roaned under this burden? and should you not be glad to be eternally delivered from it? 2. It is a life of diseases and infirmities; and should you not be willing to be cured of them all at once? 3. It is a life of temptation, Satan is still haraffing thee; and should you not be desirous to be out of his reach? 4. It is a life of persecutions from the wicked: they hate, reproach, and injure you many way: and is it not desirable to be, "where the wicked ceale from troubling, and the weary be at rest?" 5. It is a life of clouds and darkness: your fun is often vailed, and your evidences obfoured, which occasions many bitter complaints; and should you not defire that time, when the day shall break, and all shadows fly away? 6. It is a life of calamities and fears: it is like a flormy fea, where one wave rolls upon the back of another; and when one calamity is past, we many times fear a greater is coming; and sometimes the heavens turn so black and gloomy, that we fear a hurricane of judgments is ready to blow; and should you not bless God, when he comes by death to house your souls, and set you out of harm's way? It is in mercy that God takes away the righteous fron the evil to come, la. lvii. 1. So dealt he with Josiah, 2 Kings xxii. 20. " I will gather thee to thy fathers, and thou shalt be put into thy grave in peace, and thine eyes shall not see all the evil which I shall bring upon this place." So it is observ-

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able, that Methuselah died the very year before the flood; Augustine a little before the sacking of Hippo; Pareus just before the taking of Heidelberg. Luther observs, that all the aposiles died before the destruction of Jerusa. lem. And Luther himself died before the bloody wars broke out in Germany. Thus God frequently hides his people from the tempta. tions and troubles that are coming on the earth. . Why; he sees many of them not in case to en. dure them; and therefore, he in mercy takes them away from a tempting and finning world. to a land of holiness and rest. While we are here, we live in a world that lies in wickedness; every fense of the body betrays the foul into fin; the poor foul can scarce look out at the eye, and not be infected; nor hear by the ear, and not be distracted; nor finell at the nostrils, and not be tainted; nor tafte by the tongue, and not be allured; nor touch by the hand, and not be defiled.

O believer, what is this life that thou art so fond of; it is but a living death, or a dying life. It is full of grief for things past, sull of labour for things present, and full of sears for things suture. The first part of our life is spent in folly; the middle part is overwhelmed with cares: and the latter part of it is burdened with infirmities and age. And what gain we by the prolonging of this life? nothing but to do more evil, see more evil, and suffer more evil. And should a Christian be unwilling to be rid of those grievances?

2dly, Consider that dying is appointed as the

way, and the only way, to glory: there is no way to enter the promifed land, but by croffing the Jordan of death. And should not a stranger defire to be at home with his friends, though he hath a rough way and stormy fea to pass? Is there any home like heaven, where your incomparable friend Christ is? O what a happinels is it to be with Christ, and to see him as he is? how happy do you think Peter, James, and John were, in being taken up to mount Tabor, to be eye-witnesses of their Saviour's transfiguration? but, O believer, death procures a greater happiness to you; it ushers you to mount Zion, where you shall not only see your Saviour whiter than the snow, and brighter than the fun, but yourfelf transfigured with him, made like him, and eternally secured of his presence. The three apostles saw but two prophets; but you shall see all the prohets, all the apostles, all the patriarchs, all the martyrs, all the holy persons you once conversed with on earth, and in general all the faints in heaven, each of them shining as the sun; and how sweet will their company be? O how foon will the trifles of the world evanish, and all its pleasures be forgot, when once the believer gets a view of that captivating glory above! When the hepherds heard but some few notes of the angels fongs, who praised God at the nativity of our Saviour, they presently left their flocks, and ran to Bethlehem to behold the child Jesus lying in the manger; but much more cause hath abeliever to leave all the pleasures of the world, and run to behold an exalted Jesus sitting

on the throne of his glory, with all his faint and angels finging praises around him.

If Cato and Cleombrotus, two Heathens, after reading Plato's book of the immortality of the foul, did voluntarily, the one fall on his sword, the other break his neck from a precipice, that they might the sooner come (as they fancied) to partake of these joys; what a shame is it for Christians, who have a far surer and clearer discovery of these things from God's own book, to be found unwilling to enter into these heavenly joys, when their blessed Redeemer calls for them thither?

gdly, Consider how willing Christ was to come from heaven to earth for you; and should you be unwilling to remove from earth to heaven for him? yea, for yourselves, for the gain is yours? O did Christ assume your nature, become obedient to death, and purchase an inheritance for you with his blood; and will you be backward to go and take possession of it? O for a Christ-like obedience at death!

Lastly, Consider what a reproach is cast on Christianity, by a believer's unwillingness to die. For Christians to pray, and speak much of Christ, of heaven and glory, and yet be unwilling to enter into that glory; what is it but a misbelieving of God, and a tempting of strangers to think there is no reality in religion?

Quest. "Since death is not easy to grapple with, how shall I attain to this blessed disposition, a willigness to die?

Ans. 1st, Be frequently putting forth the acts of faith upon the rightcousness of Christ; and

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elieve that Christ died to bring in a perfect ighteousness for believers, that they all might e complete in him. Now, why should a beever be afraid to appear before God in Christ's ighteousness, which is so pleasing and acceptale to him? Rev. xiv. 4, 5 they are said to be without fault before the throne of God." If believer were to appear before God in his was righteousness, clothed with his own duties and performances, it would be dreadful to think of dying; but to have the white garment of an lder brother to put on, gives another wiew of death. Alas, it is our neglecting the daily exercise of faith in the righteousness of Christ, hat makes the thoughts of death so unwelcome.

adly, When you attain to peace and reconiliation with God, labour to preserve it. Be lating and clearing counts with God every day, and watch against these sins that wound concience, waste comfort, and grieve the Spiit of adoption. When we think God is displeased with us, we will be afraid of going to

him.

galy, Study to be more denied to the enjoyments of this life, and to use them with a holy indifferency; otherwise there will be an unwillingues to scave these things.

athly, Labour to be deeply sensible of the burden of indwelling sin and corruption, and the workings thereof in your hearts; and this will make the thoughts of death welcome, because it eternally delivers you from it.

5thly, Seek further discoveries of the loveline's of Christ, and the daily exercise and in-

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crease of your soul's love to him; for it is the nature of love to long after communion with the person that we love.

6thly, Make death familiar to you, by the frequent forethoughts of it. Retire of from the world to think of dying, when you are in best health.

nent of praising God, and exalting the worthy Lamb that was slain; and this will incline you to be there, where this is the continual work:

Lastly, Be oft thinking of these warnings and forerunners of death, which God sends to wean your heart from the love of life, and dispose you to a willingness to die. For this end, God sends manifold diseases, pains, infirmities, wants, straits, losses, crosses, disappointments, &c. And in a special manner, let old people view the forerunners and harbingers of death, which God fends to prepare his way: fuch as the decays and infirmities of old age, which we have elegantly described in figurative expressions, Eccles xii. 2. " Then the light of the fun, moon, and stars shall be darkened;" i.e. in old persons, the intellectual powers and faculties, which are as lights in the foul, shall be weaken-And then do "the clouds return after rain;" i. e. their distempers are frequent, like a continual dropping in a very rainy day; and the ending of one is but the beginning of another. - Vers. 3. "Then the keepers of the house do tremble;" i. e. the head and hands, which were employed for the preservation of the body, do shake .- "The strong men bow

themselves;" i. e. the legs and thighs, which are the pillars of the house, become weak and feeble .- " The grinders cease, because they are few;" i. e. the teeth, which like the upper and nether milstone, do grind our meat, and prepare it for concoction, then cease to do their part .- " Those that look out of the windows are darkned;" i. e. the eyes wax dim, whereby God calls us to turn them away from beholding vanity, and to look after the things that are not feen .- Verse 4. "The daughters of music are brought low; 'i. e. they have neither voice nor ears; they can neither fing themselves, nor take pleasure in the voice of singing men or women. Then death pulls us, as it were by the ear, to think on the music above. - Vers. 5. "The almond-tree flourisheth;" i. e. the hair grows white, like the almond-tree in the bloffom. And as the outward parts of the body do weaken and decay, so also do the inward parts thereof: therefore it is faid, Vers. 6. "The filver cord shall be loofed, the golden bowl broken, the pitcher broken at the fountain, and the wheel broken at the cistern;" i. e the filver cord of the finews is loofed. which carries the faculty of sense and motion from the head, through the body. The head, which like a golden bowl or box, contains the brain, that is the fountain of sense and motion, through age is broken, and turns crazy. The many pitchers of the veins, which carry the nourishing blood from the well to the liver unto each part of the body become like broken veffels. And the wheel of the atteries, which con-

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vey the vital spirits from the heart to the several members, for quickening them, begin to turn faint and languid. All these things do warn old persons to take their affections off time's things, and set them upon things above, that they may be helped to say, we "desire to depart, and to be with Christ."

But after all, some believers will have objections against willingness to die, some whereof I shall consider.

Object. I. "I am threatned to be cut off in

the flower of mine age."

Answ. Instead of fretting on this account, you ought rather to adore and praise a gracious God, that is willing to bestow the reward of the whole day upon thee, who hast only laboured some hours of it. Praise him, that is willing to take you so soon home; whereby you will prevent much sin and sorrow in the world.

Object. II. " I have houses and lands, and a

comfortable dwelling on the earth."

Answ. These are only needful in your passage through the world; above there is no use for these comforts. There God provideth mansions for his people a thousand times more comfortable. John xiv. 2. 2 Cor. v. 1. Surely houses of God's building, and of Christ's furnishing, are preserable to the cottages built by mens hands

Object. III. "But I am loth to leave, God's ordinances, and the sweet communion I have had with him therein."

Answ. Above there will be no need of ordinances, sacraments, Bibles, or ministers; for

the Lamb will be the light of the heavenly temple, and all hid things in religion will be discovered in Christ's face. There you will celebrate an eternal Sabbath, drink the fruit of the vine new with Christ, be ever with the Lord, without any cloud or interruption of your communion with him. Is it any loss to be taken from the shallow streams, and set by the fountain that is ever full and running over?

Object. IV. "I am loth to leave the com-

pany of godly friends and relations."

Answ. Death will take you to your friend Christ that is far better than them all. And for one friend you lose upon earth, you shall find an hundred in heaven; and these godly relations you leave here, you shall soon meet with them again there; where you will have far sweeter communion than possibly you can have upon earth with them, or the best of men, who, while here, have several infirmities and passions, that many times make their converse uncomfortable.

Object. V. "But I would fain see the glory of Zion upon earth, when God's promises to

her shall be accomplished."

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Answ. So Moses would fain have seen Israel's happiness in the promised land: but his dying in the firm belief of God's sulfilling all his promises to them there, was more acceptable to God, than his beholding the performance. And the glory of the church militant is a sight nothing comparable to that of the church triumphant above.

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Object. VI. "But I would incline to stay to do God more service in his church below, whose necessities are clamant."

Anfiv. 1. You will not want opportunity for ferving and glorifying God above, and where you will be in far better case for it. Here our hearts are oft out of tune for God's work, and we are forced to hang our harps upon the willows; but above there are no willows to hang them on; no saint there will ever complain of any indisposition of heart or tongue.

adly, God knows the necessities of his church, and is more concerned for them than thou canst be; and it is easy for him to raise up instruments to carry on his work when thou art gone.

Object. VII. "I am afraid of the pain and pangs of death. The thoughts of these make me shrink back."

Answ. 1st. Many die without much seeming sense of pain, and it is probable have less pain at the hour of death, than they have selt under several former diseases.

and each pang of death will fet fin a step nearer the door, and thy soul a step nearer home: and therefore it becometh a Christian to die cheerfully, and to be glad when he can find the grave.

Now, what I have said in this chapter is to the believing soul: for it is no wonder though the souls of the ungodly, at death, shrink back into the body, and tremble to go forth, when they can have no prospect of any better lodging than utter darkness. DIRECT. V. Study to imitate the ancient worthies, by dying in faith.

THIS was the character and epitaph of the I Old Testament saints, Heb xi. 13. "These all died in faith." As they had lived by faith, so they died in faith. They not only continued true believers to the last, dying in the state of faith, but they died in the exercise of faith also. Now, the exercise of faith in dying includes feveral things, worthy to be imitated by all dy-

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ift. An open and professed adherance to the doctrine of faith, and truths of Christianity. This faith all Christians should zealously own in the view of death, and persevere in it to the last without wavering. This would be to die like martyrs, though we die in our beds. How stedfastly did old Polycarp adhere to Christ and his truths to the last, and so died in faith! When he was urged by the proconful to deny Christ, he answered, "These fourscore and fix years have I ferved him, and he never once offended me: and how shall I now deny him?"

adly, Dying in faith imports an inward, hearty, and firm belief of the fundamental artides of the Christian faith; and improving them so, as to make them the foundation of our comfort and hope at the hour of death. As for instance, we must yield our departing souls, in the firm belief of their living and existing in a separate condition after this life, and of that future state of blessedness and rest which God hath prepared for all believers. Again, we must

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dismiss the body to the grave, in a firm belief and hope of a joyful refurrection at the last day. Thus that holy man Job both lived and died in faith, Job xix. 25, 26. "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh I shall see God." A Christian then dies in faith, when he believes these truths so, as cheerfully to obey God's call, and venture into the invisible world, upon the testimony which God hath given concerning it; as Abraham did in going out to an unknown land, Heb. xi. 8. " By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whether he went."

3dly, The believer dies in faith, when he makes fresh application to Christ as his only hope and Saviour, takes him in his arms of faith, as old Simeon did before his death, faying, "In the Lord Christ I have righteousness and strength;" though I have neither righteoufness nor strength in myself, yet I have both in him, my bleffed Surety and Redeemer. We have many uses for faith in Christ at the hour death. By faith we must depend upon Christ's blood for making atonement, and washing away the guilt of all our bypast fins. By faith we must put on the righteousness of Christ for covering our naked fouls, when they are to appear and stand before God. By faith we must rely on Christ for strength to suffer pain, resist temptations, and conquer death and all our enemies. By faith we must look to Christ as our leader, and trust him for our safe conduct through the dark valley of death, and for safe

landing on the shore of glory.

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4thly, The believer dies in faith, when he trusts his departing foul with confidence in his Redeemer's hand, faying with Paul, 2 Tim. i. 12. " I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day." This was the Pfalmist's practice, Pfal. xxxi 5. "Into thy hand I commit my spirit; for thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth." So the man that dies in faith, commits the jewel of his foul to his Redeemer's keeping, and confides in his care of it. Why, he made it, he hath redeemed it, he loves it, it is his own, a member of his body, and he will not hate his own flesh. He loves his dying faints much better than we love an eye, a hand, or any other member of our body, which, to be fure, we will not lofe, fit be in our power to fave it.

sthly, Dying in faith imports, that the dying faint confides in God's faithfulness and truth for making good all these promises to his church and people after his death, which are not yet accomplished. We should go off the stage in the firm belief of God's fulfilling all his promises concerning the prosperity of his church, the calling of the Jews, the destruction of Antichrist, and the second coming of our Lord; and likewise concerning our families, that God will be as good as his word, and be a Father to the

fatherless, and a Husband to the widow.

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Would we then be so happy as to die in faith let us take these advices.

1st, Let us be careful to get faith before hand; for death is a time to use faith, not to get it. They were foolish virgins, who had their oil to buy when the Bridegroom was come

adly, Study to live every day in the exercise of faith, and be still improving and making use of Christ, in all his offices, and for all these ends and uses for which God hath given him to believers.

3dly, Be frequently clearing up your evidences for heaven, and beware of letting fin blot them to you.

4thly, Record and lay up the experiences of God's kind dealings with you, and be often reflecting upon them, that you may have them

ready at hand in the hour of death.

Lastly, Meditate much on these promises, which have been sweet and comfortable to you in the the time of strait; and beg that the Lord may bring them to your remembrance when you come to die.

DIRECT. VI. Set the examples of other dying faints before you, and study in like manner to shine in grace, heavenly discourse, and be exemplary in piety, and for the glory of God, and good of souls, when your going off the stage.

THIS is the last opportunity you have of doing service to God, and the interest of religion; wherefore strive to improve it diligently for the honour of God, and the edis-

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cation of those that survive you. How pleasant is it to see God's people leaving the world, commending Christ and his service, and persuming the place they lie in with their last breath? I have, Chap. III. Direct. 5. and 6. adduced several motives to press this point, and given directions concerning the speech and behaviour of the children of God when on sickbeds, which I shall not repeat.

That which I defign here is, to fet before you the examples of some eminent faints, and their exemplary, pious, and holy speeches and sayings, when they were a-dying; and that in order to confirm and establish others in religion, and also to excite them to imitate these shining worthies when they also come to die. Surely it is for this very end, that God hath ordered us to be compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, Heb. xii. 1. Thus doth the apostle improve their example, Heb xi. And how earnest is he in this matter? Heb. vi. 11, 12. "And we defire, that every one of you do shew the fame diligence, to the full affurance of hope unto the end: that ye be not flothful, but followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises."

I shall begin with some examples from the sacred history; and, in the first place, with the King of saints, our Lord Jesus Christ. O how sweet and comfortable were his discourses unto his disciples, when his death drew nigh! and what a heavenly prayer did he make for them, and all his elect ones at that time! These we have recorded in the 14th, 15th, 16th, and

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able at all times for us to read and meditate upon, but especially when death is approaching. And likewise let us read the history of our Lord's passion, in which we may observe the wonderful expressions of his faith in God, his patience under sufferings, his pity to his enemies, his love to his mother and his disciples, his concern for his Fathers's glory, is obedience in his death, and his willingness to be offered up. Thus the blessed Sun of righteousness did shine forth most gloriously at his setting, with the radiant beams of his heavenly graces and virtues: and herein he hath set himself a pattern to all dying saints to the end of the world.

Jacob, when he was on his death-bed, called his fons together, and gave them many special charges and blessings; we have his excellent words recorded in Gen. xlviii. and xlix. chapters. And in particular, how sweetly doth he speak of the coming of the Messiah to them? Gen xlix. 10. 18. and how affectionately doth he commend God's goodness and kind providence towards him through his life? Gen. xlviii 15, 16. "The God which fed me all my life long unto this

day," &c.

Joseph, when he was a-dying, spoke lovingly to his brethren, who had dealt cruelly with him; and assured them of the Lord's faithfulness in keeping his promise to their fathers, Gen. 1. 20. "I die, and God will surely visit you. and bring you out of this land."

Moses, when he was to go up to mount Nebo to die there, left many bleffings, and gave many weighty charges to the children of lirael: we have his holy and ravishing words recorded, Deut. xxxii. and xxxiii. chapters. And particularly how pleasantly doth he commend God, and his ways to the people! Deut. xxxii. 4. "He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth, and without iniquity, just and right is he."

Joshua, when he was near his end, gave many folemn charges and exhortations to the people, which we have narrated, Josh. xxiii. and xxiv. chapters. And there we may fee the remarkable methods he takes to rivet impresfions and convictions upon them, now when he can instruct them no longer. And, particularly, he appeals to their consciences concerning the faithfulness of God in keeping his word to them, that so he might engage them to fidelity to him, Josh xxiii 14 " And behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth, and ye know in all your hearts and in all your fouls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you."

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David, when his end was near, affembled the people, and folemnly charged them, as in the audience of God; to keep his commandments, 1 Chron. xxviii 8, 9. And particularly, he charged his fon and successor Solomon, to "know the God of his father, and to serve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind."

The apostle Paul, when taking his last farewell of the elders of Ephesus, he most solemnly charges them, to "take heed to themselves,

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and the flocks over which the Holy Ghost had made them overseers," Acts xx. 28. And how sweetly doth he sing, in the view of approaching death! 2 Tim. iv. 6, 7, 8. "I am now ready to be offered, the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good sight, I have sinished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto them also that love his appearing."

In imitation of these scripture-saints, the people of God in all ages have studied to glorify God and edify men at their death, by commending God and godliness to their friends and families. These we ought to teach by our example, both how to live and how to die, as others have done before us. Thus said once a dying saint to his family, "I have formerly taught you how to live, and now I teach you

how to die."

Now, because in all ages the speeches of dying Christians have been much observed, and God hath remarkably blessed them to the establishment and confirmation, quickening and exciting of others to imitate them; I shall bring several examples from human histories and writings, and mostly from Clark's Lives, of sundry eminent saints, whose graces have shone brightest, and their speeches were most heavenly, when the sun of their life was at the setting.

1. That old disciple, Polycarp, when he came to the stake at which he was burnt, desired to

fland untied, faying, "Let me alone, for he that gave me strength to come to the fire, will give me patience to endure the flame without your tying."

2 So holy Cyprian triumphed over death, faying, "Let him only fear death, who must pass from this death to the second death." When he heard the sentence of death pronounced against him, he said, "I thank God for free-

ing me from the prison of this body."

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3. Basil, when the Emperor Valens sent his officers to tempt him with great preferments to turn from the faith, he rejected them with scorn, saying, "You may offer these things to children." And when they threatened him with sufferings, he said, "Threaten your purple gallants with these things, that give themselves to their pleasures."

When Modestus the Perfect threatened Basil, to conficate his goods, to torment him, to banish him, or kill him, he answered, "He need not fear confiscation, that had nothing to lose: nor banishment, to whom heaven only is a country: nor torments, when his body would be dashed with one blow; nor death, which is the only way to set him at liberty." The Perfect telling him he was mad, said, Opto me in aternum sic delirare, I wish I may for ever be thus mad.

le torn in pieces of wild beasts, he expressed his fear lest it should happen to him as to some others, that the lions out of a kind of reverence, would not dare to touch him. And therefore

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he oft wished, "That their appetites might be whitted to dispatch him. "For (said he) the lions teeth are but like a mill, which though it bruiseth, yet wasteth not the good wheat, only prepares and fits it to be made pure bread. Let me be broken by them, so I may be made pure manchet for heaven."

5. The great Mr Knox, our reformer, when he lay a-dying, was much in prayer, ever crying, "Come, Lord Jesus; sweet Jesus, into thy hands I commend my spirit." Being asked by those that attended him, if his pain was great he answered, "That he did not esseem that a pain, which would be to him the end of all trouble, and the beginning of eternal joys." Ostimes, after some deep meditations, he said, "O serve the Lord in fear, and death shall not be terrible to you: Blessed is the death of those that have part in the death of Jesus."

After a fore temptation from Satan, (which I formerly mentioned) over which he triumphed at length, he said, "Now the enemy is gone away ashamed, and shall no more return. I am sure now my battle is at an end, and that without pain of body, or trouble of spirit, I shall shortly change this mortal and miserable life, with that happy and immortal life which shall never have an end." After one had prayed for him, he was asked, whether he heard the prayer? he answered, "Would to God you had heard it with such an ear and heart as have done! adding, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." With which words, without any motion of hands or feet, as one falling assep, rather than dying, he ended his life.

6. Dr Gouge, when he was old and dying, was fore afflicted with the stone, and other painful maladies; yet though by reason of his pains he was oft heard to groan, he never once grumbled against the dispensations of God. He never cried out, a great sufferer, but oft, a great sinner: yet still comforted himself, that there is a great Saviour. In his greatest tor-ments he would say, "Well, yet in all these there is nothing of hell, or of God's wrath. 0 my foul, be filent, be patient: it is thy God and Father that thus orders thine estate. Thou art his clay; he may tread and trample upon thee as he pleaseth; thou hast deserved much more. It is enough that thou art kept out of hell; though thy pains be grievous, yet they are not intolerable, thy God affords some intermisfions; he will turn it to thy good, and at length put an end to all; and none of these comforts can be expected in hell." In his greatest pains, he oft used holy Job's words, "Shall we receive good from the hands of the Lord, and not evil also?" When any of his friends would have comforted him, with telling him of his eminent gifts and service in the ministry, he would answer, " I dare not think of any fuch thing for comfort: only Jesus Christ, and what he hath done and endured, is the ground of my sure comfort." The thoughts of death were pleasant to him, which he often termed, his best friend, next unto Jesus Christ. And he would blefs God, that he had nothing to do but to die.

7. I have read of another minister under the .

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like extreme pains. When he was asked, how he did? his frequent answer was, "The bush always burning, but not confumed; though my pains are above the strength of nature, yet they are not above the supports of grace." He would pray, "Lord drop comfort into these bitter waters of Marah. Let the blood of sprinkling, which extinguisheth the fire of thine anger, allay my burning pain. Oh, if my patience were more, my pains would be less; Lord, give me patience, and inflict what thou wilt. This is a fiery chariot, but it will carry me to heaven. O my God, break open the prison-door, and fet my poor captive soul free: I desire to be diffolved, but enable me willingly to wait thy time." He would again cry, "When shall the time come, that I shall neither sin more, nor forrow more: Lord, keep me from difhonouring thy name by impatience. Oh, who would not, even in burnings, have honourable thoughts of God! Lord, thou gavest me no occasion to have hard thoughts of thee. Blessed be God, for the peace of mine inward man, when my outward man is so full of trouble. This is a bitter cup, but it is of my Father's mixing; and shall I not then drink it?"

8. Mrs Jean Askew, who was a martyer in King Henry's reign, to her confession in Newgate she thus subscribed; "Written by me Jean Askew, that neither wisheth death, nor feareth its might, and as merry as one bound towards heaven." When the chancellor sent her letters at the stake, offering her the king's pardon, if she would recant; she refusing to look upon

them, gave this answer: " That she came not

hither to deny her Lord and Master."

9. Mr James Bainham, when he was at the stake in the midst of the burning fire, which had half consumed his legs and arms, spake these words; "O ye Papists! behold ye look for miracles, and here now ye may see a miracle; for in this fire I feel no more pain, than if I were in a bed of down; it is to me as a bed of roses."

10. John Lambert, as hewas burning in Smithfield, and his legs were quite confumed with the fire, he lift up his hands, his fingers flaming like torches, but his heart abounding with comfort, crying out, "None but Christ, none but Christ."

11. Mr Robert Glover, a little before his death, had lost the sense of God's savour, for which he was in great heaviness and sorrow; but when he came within sight of the stake at which he was to suffer, he was on a sudden so silled with divine comfort, that, clapping his hands together, he cried out to his servant, "He is come, he is come;" and so died most cheerfully.

12. It was a faying of Augustine, "Boughs fall off trees, and stones out of buildings; and and why should it seem strange that mortal men

die ? "

13. Mr John Dod had a violent fever, that there was but little hope of his life; yet at length his physician coming to him, said, "Now I have hope of your recovery." To whom Mr Dod answered, You think to comfort me with

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this, but you make my heart fad. It is as if you should tell one who had been fore weather-beaten at sea, and conceiving he was now arrived at the haven where his soul longed to be, that he must go back again to be tossed with new winds and waves."

He would often fay in his last sickness, "I am not afraid to look death in the face. I can say, Death where is thy sting? death cannot hurt me."

He used to say, "The knowledge of two things would make one willing to die, viz. What heaven is, and that it is mine." "Yes, (said one) if a man were sure of that." To whom he answered, "Truly assurance is to be had; and what have we been doing all this while?"

Some others of the Lyings of this holy man were so pithy and remarkable, I cannot pass them here.

Once Mr Dod coming to visit a godly minister on his death-bed, who was much oppressed with melancholy, and complained to him, saying, "O Mr Dod, what will you say of him who is going out of the world, and can find no comfort?" To whom Mr Dod answered, "What will you say of our Saviour Christ, who, when he was going out of the world, sound no comfort, but cried out, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"—He said of assistances, "they are God's portions, which we may sweeten by fasth and faithful prayer; but we, for the most part, make them better, putting into God's cup the evil ingredients of

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our impatience and unbelief .- He called death the friend of grace, though it be the enemy of nature; for whereas the word, sacraments, and prayer, do but weaken fin, death kills it." He used to say, " A man is never in a hard condition, unless he have a hard heart, and cannot pray." He instructed Christians how they should never have a great nor lasting affliction, and that was, by looking upon the things that are not feen, which are eternal, 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18. For what can be great to him that counts the world nothing? And what can be long to him, that accounts his life but a span long?-When he saw a christian look sad, he would say as Jonadah did to Amnon, "Art thou a king's fon, and lookest so ill?" And when such complained to him of their loffes and croffes, he would use the words of Eliphaz to Job, "Do the confolations of God feem small unto you? God hath taken from you your children, your goods, &c. but he hath not taken from you himself, his Christ, nor his Spirit, nor heaven, nor eternal life."

To a friend of his that rose from a mean to a great estate, he sent word, "That this was but as if he should go out of a boat into a barge or ship; but he ought seriously to remember, that whilst he was in this world, he was but upon the floating sea.

He oft said, "That if it were lawful to envy any, he would envy those that turn to God in their youth, whereby they escape much sin and sorrow, and are like Jacob, that stole the blessing betimes.—He used to compare reproofs

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given in passion, to scalding potions, which the patient could not take down: in reproofs we should labour for meekness of wisdom, using soft words and hard arguments.

He was a most popular minister, but much persecuted. Once he took a journey to see his father-in-law, Mr Greenham, and to bemoan himself to him, upon account of his crosses and hard usage. Mr Greenham, having heard all he could say, answered him thus; "Son, son, when affliction lieth heavy, sin lieth light." Mr Dod used oft to bless God for this speech, saying, "If Mr Greenham had bemoaned him as he expected, he had done him much hurt." He forgot not this saying in his old age, but made excellent use of it for himself and others.

Oecolampadius, that famous divine of Switzerland, when lying on his death-bed, and being asked, Whether the light did not offend him? he answered, pointing to his breast, His sat lucis, "Here is abundance of light;" meaning of comfort and joy. He asked one of his friends, What news? His friend answered, none. Thes, saith he, I will tell you some news; I shall presently be with my Lord Christ.

15. A certain godly man passing through his last sickness with extraordinary calmness of conscience, being asked by some of his friends anent it, he answered, that he had stedsastly fixed his heart upon that sweet promise, Isa. xxvi.

3. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is staid on thee; because he trusteth in thee." And my God (said he) hath graciously made it fully good unto my soul.

16. Mr Robert Bolton, minister at Broughton, well known by his writings, in the time of his last sickness, which was long and sharp, he often breathed out these words: " Oh, when will this good hour come? when shall I be diffolved? when shall I be with Christ?" Being told, that to be diffolved was indeed better for him, yet it would be better for the church that he would stay here; he answered, "If I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and shew me both it and his habitation; but if otherwise, lo, here I am, let him do what seemeth good in his eyes." Being asked by another, if he could not be content to live, if it pleased God? he answered, "I grant that life is a great bleffing of God, neither will I neglect any means that may preferve it; and do heartily fubmit to God's will; but of the two, I infinitely defire more to be disfolved, and to be with Christ." He bade all that came to fee him, make fure of Christ before they came todie, and look upon the world now as a lump of vanity .- He encouraged the ministers that came to him, to be diligent and courageous in the work of the Lord, and not to faint nor droop for any affliction that should arise thereupon.

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When he found himself very weak, he called for his wife and children. He desired her to bear his dissolution, which was now at hand, with a Christian fortitude, a thing he had been preparing her for by the space of twenty years; and bade her make no doubt but she should meet him again in heaven. He exhorted his children

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to remember these things he had frequent told them before; adding, "That he hoped a believed, that none of them durst think to me him at that great tribunal in an unregenera flate."

Some of his parish coming to watch with his it was moved, that as by his doctrine he h discovered to them the exceeding comfor that were in Christ, so he would now tell the what he felt in his own foul. " Alas, (faid he do you look for that of me now, that wan breath and strength to speak? I have told w enough in my ministry; but yet to satisfy you am, by the wonderful mercies of God, as fi of comfort as my heart can hold; and I feel a thing in my foul but Christ, with whom I hea tily defire to be." And observing some wee ing, he looked to them and faid, "Oh, wha deal ado there is before one can die.

When the pangs of death were upon him, b ing told, that some of his dear friends were bout him, to take their last farewell, he caus himself to be raised up in his bed; and after few gaspings for breath, he said, "I am no drawing on apace to my diffolution; hold of faith and patience, your work will speedily at an end." And then shaking them all by t hands, he prayed hartily and particularly them; and defired them to make fure of heave and to bear in mind what he had formerly to them in his ministry, protecting to the doctrine he had preached to them for the the doctrine he had preached to them for the space of twenty years was the truth of God, he should answer it at the tribunal of Chri before whom he should shortly appear.

When he was struggling with death, a very ar friend taking him by the hand, asked him, he felt not much pain? "Truly no, (faid he),

e greatest I feel is your cold hand."

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17. Mr John Holland, a godly minister, con-17. Mr John Holland, a goddy mued his usual practice of expounding the mued his usual practice of expounding the last; and the day ipture in his family to the last; and the day 10 fore his death he called for a Bible, and caufanother read the 8th chapter of the Romans, discoursed upon it verse by verse; but on a and dden he said, "O stay your reading; what ightness is this I see! have you lighted up any J. ndle?" A stander-by said, No, it is the sunine, (for it was about five o'clock in a clear is my Saviour's shine. Now farewell world; elected heaven; the day star from on high my heart: O speak it when I am one, and preach it at my funeral; God dealeth miliarly with man; I feel his mercy, I fee his re sjefty; whether in the body, or out of the dy, I cannot tell, God he knoweth; but I see ings that are unutterable." And in this rapno re he continued till he died.
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an G. M. that fell into several such extraor-lary raptures sometime before his death, such his bodily strength and spirit were not able fupport under, though he had no sickness.

It metimes he was so swallowed up and overthe me by the manifestations of God's love to ort sfoul, that his words could not be well unod, inflood; his natural colour, heat, and strength, this ould so go off, that all about him would con-

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Some of his parish coming to watch with him, it was moved, that as by his doctrine he had discovered to them the exceeding comforts that were in Christ, so he would now tell them what he felt in his own soul. "Alas, (said he) do you look for that of me now, that wants breath and strength to speak? I have told you enough in my ministry; but yet to satisfy you, am, by the wonderful mercies of God, as sull of comfort as my heart can hold; and I feel nothing in my soul but Christ, with whom I heartily desire to be." And observing some weeping, he looked to them and said, "Oh, what deal ado there is before one can die.

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the greatest I feel is your cold hand."

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18. I knew not long ago, an eminently godly man G. M. that fell into several such extraordinary raptures sometime before his death, such as his bodily strength and spirit were not able to support under, though he had no sickness. Sometimes he was so swallowed up and overcome by the manifestations of God's love to his soul, that his words could not be well understood; his natural colour, heat, and strength, would so go off, that all about him would con-

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clude him to be dying: but when he was able to get words uttered, they were so heavenly and ravishing concerning the love of Christ, and freedom of grace, that by-standers could not hear him without weeping. Sometimes ministers, when they came to visit him, and found him in these raptures, were forced to to turn all their prayers in his benalf into praises; except some petitions they would put up to God, "That he might graciously spare and be tender of his weak body, and enable him to bear that load of loving-kindness God was pleased to let out to him, and which his present bodily strength was not sufficient for." Yea, they would be put to cry. "Lord, if it be thy will, hold thy hand for he is but a clay veffel; this new wine will burst the ald bottle; preserve him in life as a monument of the rich grace of God, for the conviction of Atheists and carnal people and for the confirmation of the faith of the children of God." - sometimes he would cry in abrupt expressions, O angels! help me to praise him! O saints admire his love, and wonder at him. - Again, O flames of love! my foul sceth Christ! the heavens open! I see a throne, and the Lamb in the midst of the throne! O what think ye of Christ? my foul breathes, breathes towards him! my spirit is exhaled out of me by the manifestations of God!"-He uled frequently to fay with a heavenly air to his friends, O what think ye of Christ?—When his extacy did fomewhat abate, to that he attained a pleafant calmness of thought, and freedom of speech, he would discourse of the mysteries of d

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religion, the electing love of God, the freedom of grace, the unfearchable riches of Christ, and the glorious contrivance of redemption through his death and facrifice; I fay, he would talk of thefe things more like an angel than a man. For fuch was his heavenly eloquence, fluency of words, and facility of speaking upon these subjects, (which otherwise was not natural to him), that these who came to see him were exceedingly surprised and astonished to hear him. His body gradually weakened under these raptures of spirit, and he longed much to be off the world, because he thought he could be so little uleful in it for advancing God's honour. He reckoned himself bound to improve the short time he was like to have here, in commending Christ and religion to all that he had access to, and also to admonish them of any thing he knew amis in them, which he did most convincingly. And having occasion to see some who vilipended the established church and the ordinances dispensed in it; he highly commended the ordinances, and told them, that from his own sweet experience he could say, that God was to be found in them. -He feemed to have fin wonderfully mortified; for he complained of no other heart-pleague but felf, and it was his great exercise to get self wholly subdued; he purfued it through many of its windings and lurking-places, and after all he would regret his little success against it. (faid he) when I am in my most elevated frames, and admitted to the nearest access to my Redeemer, that subtle enemy self will en-

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ter in with me, and offer to pull the crown off

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his head before my face."

Once after hearing a fermon on Pfal. lxxxv. 8. "I will hear what God the Lord will speak," he broke out in a rapturous discourse to one that came to see him, blessing God that he had spoke to him in that sermon. "And O (said he) what am I, that the Rock of Israel should have spoke to me these three sermon-days bygone, assuring me that all my sins are forgiven! What am I, a vile worm, that he should be so kind and condescending, as to discover Christ and heaven in such a manner to me, and assure me that I will shortly be with him! Oh, I thought that I had sinned him away from me, but I see he will not bide away! O admirable free grace! O help me to praise him!"

When death drew near, there was some alteration in his ease; yet he never questioned his interest in Christ; but still afferted, "I know he is my God and my Redeemer, and I will shortly be with him." And once when he was ready to complain for want of God's wonted manifestations, he said, "The Lord knew his body was now weak, and could not bear what formerly he had met with, yet (said he) glory to his name, he hath given me three blinks

since my last illness began."

Oxford, in his last sickness used to exhort all about him to get faith above all things. "It is (said he) your victory, your peace, your life, your crown, and your chiefest piece of spiritual armour. Howbeit, get on all other piece, and go forth in the Lord's might: Sand to the

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fight, and the iffue shall be glorious. Only forget not to call in the help of your General. Do all from him and under him."—On the Lord's days he would not have any kept from the ordinances upon his account; and, when they returned from the sermons, he would say to them, "Come, what have you for me?" And when any gave him account of what they have heard, he would returne the heads thereof, and say, "O what excellent truths are these! Lay them up carefully, for you will have need of them."—When friends came to visit him, he would say, "I cannot speak, but I can hear." Being asked, where his comfort lay? He answered, "In Christ, and in the free grace of God."

One telling him, that he might take much comfort in his labours, and the good he had done; his answer was, "All is nothing without a Saviour, without him my best works would condemn me. Oh, I am ashamed of them, they are so mixed with sin. I have done nothing for God as I ought.—Oh, loss of time sits very heavy upon my spirit. Work, work apace; assure yourselves nothing will more trouble you when you come to die, than that you have done no more for God, who hath done so much for you."

Sometimes he used thus to breathe out himself, I never in all my life saw the worth of a Christ, nor tasted the sweetness of God's love in that measure as now I do."—Being asked by ministers, what they should chiefly request for him? he answered, "Do not only pray for me, but praise God that he supports me, and keeps

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off Satan from me in my weakness; beg that I may hold out. I am now a good way home, near the shore, I leave you tossing on the sea;

Oh, it is a good time to die in."

In all the letter-wills which he made, he took care this legacy should still be inserted; "Item, I bequeath to all my children, and to their children's children, to each of them a Bible, with this inscription, None but Christ." He used to say, "It is a hard thing for a saint to forgive himself some saults, when God hath forgiven them."

20. David Chitræus, when he lay a-dying, lift up his head from the pillow to hear the discourses of his friends that sat by him, and said, "That he should die with the greater comfort, if he might die learning something."

- 21. Mr Cooper, when a-dying said, "I saw not my children when they were in the womb, yet there the Lord sed them without my care or knowledge. I shall not see them when I go out of the body, yet shall they not want a father." Again, death is somewhat driery, and the streams of that Jordan between us and our Canaan run suriously, but they stand still when the ark comes."
- 22. The Reverend Mr Halyburton, that shining light in St Andrews, when a-dying commended Christ and godliness with great earnest-ness, to all that came to see him. He exhorted his brethren to diligence in the ministry. "It was the delight of my heart (said he) to preach the gospel: Idesired to decrease, that the Bridegroom might increase; and to be nothing, that he might be all. I repent I did not more for him. O

that I had the tongues of men and angels, to praise him!" When he was advised to lie quiet, he said, "Whereon should a man bestow his last breath, but in commending the Lord Jesus Christ, God clothed in our nature, dying for our sins?"

Hecaused read one of Mr Rutherford's Letters, viz. that to Mr John Mein, and thereafter said, "That is a book I would commend to you all, there is more practical religion in that letter,

than in a book of a larger volume."

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He exhorted fome ministers that came to see him to faithfulnels. "As for the work of the ministry (said he) it was my deliberate choice. were my days lengthened out much more, and days as troublesome as they are like to be, I would rather be a contemned minister of God, than the greatest prince on earth."-He said, when taking farewell of his wife, children, and fervants, "Here is a demonstration of the reality of religion, that I a poor, weak, timorous man, as much afraid of death as any, am now enabled, by the power of grace, composedly and with joy to look death in the face. I dare look it in the face in its most ghastly shape, and hope within a little to have the victory. I cannot but commend the Lord Jesus. As far as my word will go, I must proclaim it, he is the best Master that ever I saw." To his son, who was a child, he faid, "If I had as many fons as there are hairs in your head, I would bestow them all on God."-To some present he said, "O Sirs, Idread mightily that a rational fort of religion is coming in among us; I mean by it, a religion

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that consists in a bare attendance on outward duties and ordinances, without the power of godliness: and thence people shall fall into a way of serving God, which is mere Deism, having no relation to Christ Jesus and the Spirit of God."—He expressed his sears of a storm coming on the church of Scotland; but he said, "The day would break, and the Lord would arise, and he hoped the church would be made a wonder, and the Lord will say, Lo, this people have I formed for mysels; he can make a nation to be born at once."—He cried often with the spouse in the Song, "When shall the day break, and the shadows sly away? Turn my beloved, and be thou as a roe, or a young hart on the mountains of Bether."

He faid, "Shall I forget Zion? Nay, let my right hand forget her cunning, if I prefer not Jerusalem to my chiefest joy. O to have God returning to this church, and his work going on in the world! If every drop of my blood, every bit of my body, every hair of my head, were all men; they should all go to the fire to have this going on."---He said, "If I would say, that I would speak no more in the name of the Lord, it would be like a fire within me. I am calling you to fee a miracle, God is melting me down into corruption and dust, and yet he is keeping me in a calm .--- I could not believe that I would have born, and born cheerfully this rod so long; this is a miracle, pain without pain; and this is not a fancy of a man disordered in his brain, but of one lying in full composure. O blessed be God, that ever I was born. I have a father and mother, and ten brethren and sisters in heaven, and I shall be the eleventh. I shall shortly be at that glory I have been long expecting: Though I come not near Mr Shield's glory, nor Mr Anderson's, yet I will be well enough if I win in. Worthy

is the Lamb to receive glory."

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23. Mr Hugh Mackaill, in his speech before his death, faith, "I have esteemed the solemn engagements of this nation to the Lord, pregnant performances of that promise, Ita. xliv. 5 where it is evident, that where church-reformations come to any maturity, they arrive at this degree of faying, I am the Lord's, and fubscribing with the hand unto the Lord. So was it in the days of the reforming kings of Judah, and after the restoration from the captivity of Babylon in the days of Nehemiah. This same promise did the Lord Jesus make Yea and Amen to us, when he redeemed us from spiritual Babylon .--- I glorify him, that he hath called me forth to fuffer for his name and ordinances, and the folemn engagements of the land to him. Hereafter I will not talk with flesh and blood, nor think on the worlds consolations. Farewell all my friends, whose company hath been refreshful to me in my pilgrimage. I have done with the light of the fun and moon. Welcome eternal life, everlasting love, everlasting praise, everlasting glory. Praise to him that sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever."

24. The famous Mr Durham being visited by a minister in his last sickness, which was long and lingering, who said to him, Sir, I hope you have so set all in order, that you have nothing else to do but die. "I bless God, (faid Mr Durham) I have not had that to do neither

these many years."

25 Mr Rowland Nevet, his dying prayer for his children was, that the Mediator's bleffing might be the portion of every one of them, Adding to them, I charge you all, see to it, that you meet me on the right hand of Christ at the great day. When he was sometimes much spent with his labours, he would appeal to God, that though he might be wearied in his service, he would never be weary of it .- Being oft diftempered in his body, he would fay, he was never better than in the pulpit, and that it was the best place he could wish to die in.

26. Mr Philip Henry, when a-dying, his pains were very sharp, he said to his neighbours who came to see him, O make sure work for your fouls, by getting an interest in Christ, while you are in health; for if I had that work to do now, what would come of me. A little before his last illness he wrote to a reverend brother, ". Methinks it is strange, that it should be your lot and mine to abide so long on earth by the stuff, when so many of our friends are dividing the spoil above; but God will have it so; and to be willing to live in obedience to his holy will, is as true an act of grace, as to be willing to die is when he calls." One asking him how he did, he answered, "I find the chips fly off apace, hir the tree will be down shortly." He was sometimes taken with fainting fits, which when he recovered from, he would fay, " Dying is buta an

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ittle more." Once he faid, after recovery, Well, I thought I had been putting into the harbour, but I find I must yet to sea again."

27. Mr Matthew Henry, his death was somewhat sudden, he said a little before it, to some bout him, "You have been used to take noice of the fayings of dying men; this is mine. That a life spent in the service of God, and comnunion with him, is the most comfortable and

leafant life that any one can live in this world." at 28. Holy and learned Mr Rutherford, a little refore his death, left a written testimony to our ovenanted work of reformation; and therein er he proves the warrantableness of nations enterng into covenant with God under the New-Testament times, and shews, that this practice ins s the accomplishment of several Old-Testaho hent prophecies, such as Jer. 1. 4, 5. Isa. ii. 3. lech. viii. 2. Ifa. xix. 23, 24, 25. which relate o gospel-times. And when he was dying, he ent several messages to the presbytery of St indrews, defiring them to adhere to God's ause and covenant.—In his sickness he oft roke out in facred raptures, extolling and ommending the Lord Jesus, whom he often the alled his bleffed Master, his kingly King. When be is death drew near, he said I shall shine, I shall e him as he is, I shall see him reign, and all is fair company with him, and I shall have my arge share: my eyes shall see my Redeemer, hir very eyes of mine, and no other for me." ice, -When exhorting one to be diligent in seeking od, he faid, "It is no easy thing to be a Chrisan; but for me, I have gotten the victory, and

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Christ is holding out both his arms to embrace me."-He was wonderfully strengthened against the fears of suffering and of death, "For," fays he, "I said to the Lord, if he should slay me five thousand times five thousand times, I would trust in him; and I spoke it with much tremb. ling, fearing I should not make my put good, But as really as ever he spoke to me by his Spirit, he witnessed unto my heart, that his grace should be sufficient for me."-He said to fome ministers that came to see him, " My Lord and Master, is the chief of ten thousand of thousands, none is comparable to him in heaven, or in earth. Dear brethren, do all for him, pray for Christ, preach for Christ, feed the flock committed to your charge for Christ visit and catechise for Christ; do all for Christ, and beware of man-pleasing. Feed the flock out of love, the chief Shepherd will appear shortly."—Once when he recovered from a fainting fit, he faid, "I feel, I ver feel, I believe, I enjoy, I rejoice, I feed on manna."—As he took a little wine in a spoon. Mr Robert Blair faid to him, You feed on the dainties of heaven, and think nothing of our wil cordials on earth. He answered, "They are my all but dung, yet they are Christ's creatures and in obedience to his command, I take them." liv -After some discourse, Mr Blair said to him What think you now of Christ? To which he replied, I shall live and adore him; glory, glory, la to my Creator, and to my Redeemer for ever Glory shines in Emmanuel's land .- Afterward he faid, "O that all my brethren did know what

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Master I have served, and what peace I have his day! I shall sleep in Christ, and when I wake I shall be satisfied with his likeness."-Then he faid, "This night shall close the door, and put my anchor within the vail; I shall go away in a fleep by five o'clock in the morning:" which exactly fell out. That night, though ne was very weak, he oft had this expression,) for arms to embrace him! O for a well-tuned harp!

When some spoke to him of his former painulness and faithfulness in the work of God; he said, " I disclaim all that; the port I would be in at, is redemption and forgiveness of fins brough his blood." His last words were, "Glory, glory dwelleth in Emmanuel's land." 29. Hugh Kennedy, provost of Ayr, when he was a dying, a minister said to him, You have

ause, Sir, to be assured that the angels of God are now waiting at the stoups of this bed to convey your foul to Abraham's hofom: to whom his answer was, "I am sure thereof; and if the walls of this house could speak, they could tell the now many sweet days I have had in fellowship with God, and how familiar he hath been with my foul."—He was one of the greatest wresters with God that was in the age wherein he lived, and had most remarkable returns of prayer. The great Mr Welsh, in a latter from France, said to him, "Happy is that city, yea,

happy is that nation, that hath a Hugh Kennedy ver in it; I have myself certainly found the answers of his prayers from the Lord in my behalf."

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30. The great Mr Robert Bruce, ministe of Edinburgh, when dying through weakness and old age, being asked by one of his friends How matters flood now betwixt God and his foul? answered, "When I was young, I was diligent, and lived by faith on the Son of God but now I am old, and not able to do fo much yet he condescends to feed me with lumps of sense" That morning before he died, he came to breakfast at his table, and having eat, as he used, one single egg; he faid to his daughter I think I am yet hungry, you may bring me and ther. But presently he fell into a deep meditation; and having mused a while, he said "Hold, daughter, hold, my Master calls me." With these words his fight failed him, where upon he called for the Bible: but finding his fight gone, he faid, "Cast me up the eight chap ter of the epistle to the Romans, and set my finger on these words, "I am persuaded, tha neither death, nor life, nor angels, &c. shallbe able to separate me from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus my Lord." Now, faith he is my finger upon them? they told him it was Then, without any more, he said, "Now Got No be with you, my children, I have breakfasted said with you, and shall sup with my Lord Jesu Christ this night." And so gave up the ghost

31. John Stewart, provost of Ayr, was a sine he gularly pious man; yet when he lay a-dying, he bel faid to some about him, "I go the way of all Ir flesh, and it may be some of you doubt nothing fer of my well-being: yea. I testify, that excep when I slept, or was on business, I was no eli these ten years without thoughts of God, so long as I could be in going from my house to the cross; and yet I doubt myself, and am in great agony, yea, at the brink of despair." But a day or two before he died, he turned his face to the wall from company for two hours. Then Mr Ferguson the minister coming in, asked what he was a-doing? upon which he turned himself, with these words, "I have been fighting and working out my salvation with fear and trembling; and now I blefs God, it is perfected, fealed, confirmed, and all fears are gone."

32. Luther when he fell fick, made his will, in which he bequeathed his detellation of Popery to his friends, and to the pastors of the church,

having before made this verse,

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Festis eram vivus, moriens ero mors tua, Papa.

In his last will, he faith, "O Lord God, I thank thee that thou wouldst have me live a poor and indigent person upon earth. I have neither house nor lands, nor possessions, nor money, bleave. Thou, Lord, hast given me wife and was thildren; them, Lord, I give back unto thee. Got Nourish, instruct, and keep them. O thou the latter of orphans, and judge of the widows, elu s thou hast done to me, so do to them."

holf In his last prayer, Feb. 18th, 1546, he hath fine hele words: "I pray God to preserve his gof-t, he bel among us; for the Pope, and the council of f al Frent, have grievous things in hand. O heahing tenly Father, I give thee thanks that thou hast evealed to me thy Son Jesus Christ, whom I elieve, whom I profess, whom I glorify, and

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whom the Pope and the root of the wicked persecute and dishonour." Mr Fox saith of Luther, "That a poor friar should be able to stand against the Pope was a great miracle; that he should prevail against the Pope was a greater; and after all to die in peace, having so many

enemies, was the greatest of all."

33. Mr Joseph Allein, a most painful, laborious minister, being deprived of the use of his arms and legs before his death, was asked by a friend, How he could be so well contented to lie so long in that condition? He answered, "What! is God my Father, Jesus Christ my Saviour, and the Holy Spirit my Sanctifier and Comforter; and shall I not be content without limbs and health? He is an unreasonable wretch that cannot be content with a God, though he had nothing else."

When his people of Taunton came to Dorchester to see him, where he lay; he was much revived, and would be fet up in his bed, have the curtains drawn by, and defired them to stand round about the bed; and caused take out his hand, and hold it out to them, that they might take it, as he used formerly to do, when he had been absent from them. And though very weak, yet he spake to them thus "O how it rejoiceth my heart to fee your faces, and to hear your voices, though I cannot speak as heretofore unto you. Methinks, I am now like old Jacob, with all his fons about him. you ice my weak estate; thus I have been for many weeks fince I parted with you, but Go hath been with me. My freinds, life is mine death is mine; in that covenant of which

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preached to you, is all my falvation, and all my defire: although my body do not prosper, I hope through grace my foul doth. I have lived a sweet life by the promises, and I hope through grace can die by a promise. It is the promises of God that will stand by us. Nothing but God in them will stand us in a day of affliction. My dear friends, I feel the power of these doctrines I preached to you on my heart, the doctrines of faith, of repentance, of felf-denial, of the covenant of grace, of contentment, &c. 0 that you would live them over, now I cannot preach them to you! It is a shame for a believer to be cast down under afflictions, that hath fo many glorious privileges, justification, adoption, fanctification, and eternal glory .- We shall be as the angels of God in a little while; nay, to fay the truth, believers are, as it were, little angels already, that live in the power of faith. O my friends, live like believers, trample this dirty world under your feet; be not taken with its comforts, nor disquieted with its crosses, you will be gone out of it shortly."

When they came to take leave of him, he would needs pray with them as his weak state did suffer him.—Then he said, "Farewell, my dear friends; go home and live over what I have preached to you, and the Lord provide for you when I am gone. Now I cannot preach to you, but let my wasted strength, and useless limbs, be a sermon to you. I am afraid of some of you, after all I have spoken to you. There are many professors who can pray well, and talk well, whom we shall find at the left hand

of Christ another day. You have your trades, your estates, your relations; be not taken with these, but with God: O live on him. For the Lord's sake, go home and take heed of the of the world, worldly cares, worldly comforts, worldly relations, &c. Oh! let not my labours and fufferings, let not my wasted strength, and useless limbs, rise up in judgment against you at the great day of the Lord."-Then he faid, "The Lord having given authority to his ministers to bless his people, accordingly I bless you in his name," (using the words he always used after facraments), "The Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord cause his face to shine upon you, and give you peace. And the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well please ing in his fight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

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In the mornings, his first specches would be (which he also used in his health), "Now we have one day more; this is one more for God; now let us live well this day, work hard for our souls; lay up much treasure in heaven this day, for we have but a few to live."

Being taken to the Bath, where he met with extraordinary kindness from strangers, for many resorted to him, to see him, and hear him speak, having heard what a monument of mercy he was: he did delight himself much in the consideration of the Lord's kindness to him, and the tokens of strangers their love, and would

often fay, "I was a stanger, and mercy took me in; in prison, and it came to me; sick and weak, and it visited me." N. B. He had been much persecuted, and put in prison, for no other crime but preaching the gospel.

He had a most pious and affectionate wise, that waited closely upon him, to whom he said, "Now, my dear heart, my companion in all my tribulations and afflictions, I thank thee for all thy pains and labours for me at home and abroad, in prison and liberty, in health and sickness." And he prayed, that the Lord would requite her, sill her with all manner of grace and consolations, and support and carry her through all difficulties.

He had some conflicts with Satan a little before his death: once he uttered these words, "Away; thou foul fiend, thou enemy of all mankind, thou subtile sophister, art thou come now to molest me? Now I am just going! Now I am fo weak, and death upon me! Trouble me not, for I am none of thine! I am the Lord's; Christ is mine, and I am his, his by covenant; I have fworn myself to be the Lord's, and his I will be; therefore be gone." These last words he repeated often, as pleading his covenanting with God, as a mean to resist the devil and his temptations. When he looked on his weak confumed hands, he would fay, "These shall be changed: this vile body shall be made like to Christ's glorious body. O what a glorious day will the day of refurrection be! Methinks I see it by faith: how will the faints lift up their heads, and rejoice! and how fadly will the

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wicked world look then! O come let us make haste, our Lord will come shortly! If we long to be in heaven, let us hasten with our work; for when that is done, away we shall be setched. O this vain, foolish, dirty world! I wonder how resonable creatures can so dot upon it! What is in it worth the looking after! I care not to be in it longer than while my Master hath either doing or suffering work for me: were that done, farewell to earth."

This eminent saint had this testimony given him by one; It may be said of him, in as high a degree as of most saints on earth, that each thought was to him a prayer, each prayer a song, each day a Sabbath, each meal a sacrament, and so his life on earth a foretaste of that eternal repast, to which he hath now arived.

34. The noble Marquis of Argyll, being a zealous friend of our covenanted reformation, was put to death May 27th, 1661. His friends contrived methods for his making his escape out of the castle of Edinburgh; but he thanked them, and told them, he would not difown the good cause he had so publicly espoused, but resolved to suffer the utmost. When the fentence of death was passed by the parliament, on Saturday May 25th, he said, "I had the honour to fet the crown upon the king's head, and now he hastens me to a better crown than his own." Then he was sent to the tolbooth. His excellent lady embracing him when he entered, wept bitterly, faying, several times, "The Lord will require it." Not any in the room could refrain from tears; but the Marquis e

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himself was perfectly composed, and said, "Forbear, forbear; truly I pity them, they know not what they are doing: they may shut me in where they please, but they cannot shut out God from me. For my part, I am as content to be here as in the castle, and as content in the castle as in the tower of London," (where he was first put), " and as content there as when at liberty; and I hope to be as content upon the scaffold as any of them all."-He added, that he remembered a scripture cited to him lately by an henest minister in the castle, and endeavoured to put it in practice, when Ziglag was taken and burnt, and the people spoke of stoning David, "He encouraged himself in the Lord his God." All his short time, till Monday, he spent with, the greatest serenity and cheerfulness, and in the proper exercises of a dying Christian. He said to some ministers, allowed to be with him in the prison, that shortly they would envy him who was got before them .- And added, "Mind that I tell you, my skill fails me, if you who are ministers will not either suffer much, or sin much: for though you go alongst with these men in part, if you do it not in all things, you are but where you were, and so must suffer; and if you go not at all in with them you shall but fuffer."

The Marquis was naturally timorous, but he defired those about him to observe, as he could not but do, that the Lord had heard his prayers, and removed all fear from him. And indeed his friends work was to restrain and qualify his fervent longings after his dissolution, and

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not to support him under the near views of The Lord was exceeding kind to him at the time; for upon Monday-morning, that day h fuffered, when he was in the midft of company and thronged in subscribing papers relating to this estate, he was so overcome with a singular manifestation from God, that he broke out it a rapture, and said, "I thought to have concealed the Lord's goodness, but it will not do to I am now ordering my affairs, and God is seal the ing my charter to a better inheritance, and ju now faying to me, Son, be of good cheer, the fins are forgiven thee." After he had retire fometime alone, when he opened the door Mr Hutcheson, one of the ministers that attended ed him, said to him, What cheer, my lord? he answered, "Good cheer, Sir, the Lord hat I again confirmed and said to me, from heaver Son, be of good cheer, thy fins are forgiven thee.

And he gushed out in abundance of tears of joy so that he retired to the windows, and were there. Afterwards he said in a persect rapture to Mr Hutcheson, "I think his kindness over comes me; but God is good to me, that lets no out too much of it here, for he knows I could not bear it: get my clock and let us go." But being told that the town-clock was kept back fo that the hour was not yet come; he answer ed, "They are far in the wrong;" and profently kneeled down, and prayed before all profent, in a most sweet and heavenly manner, to the refreshment of all that were there.

When he was going out to the scaffold, he faid, I could die like a Roman, but I chuse ra

fi her to die as a Christian. Come away, gen-the hemen, he that goes first, goes cleanliest."— h When going down, he called Mr James Guthrie and him, and embracing him in the most endeart in way, took his farewell of him. Mr Guthrie, ula st parting, addressed the Marquis thus, " My at i lord, God hath been with you he is with you, do be fentence of death myself, I could cheerfully

ju he for your lordship." So they parted for a the hort season, in two or three days to meet in a ire etter place.

The Marquis, in his speech on the scaffold, and ath these words, "God hath laid engagements hope Scotland; we are tied by covenant to rehat gion and reformation. Those that were then ver aborn are engaged to it, and it passeth the ee. ower of any under heaven to absolve a man joy from the oath of God."

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vej 35. Mr John Welsh, minister of the gospel at tur yr, whom Mr Rutherford (in his preface to ver is survey of Antinomianism) calls that apos-no blic, heavenly and prophetical man of God; oul and there tells us, that he had it from those that But were witnesses of his life, that of every twenty-acl our hours he gave usually eight to prayer, ver and that he spent many nights in prayer to God, producerceeding for suffering Protestants abroad, as propell as for his mother-church. This holy man, then prisoner in the castle of Blackness, and in be view of death, (being condemned to it for hamintaining the liberties of this church, though ratherwards the fentence was changed into ban-

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ishment), in his letter to a christian lady hat these words:

"I long to eat of that tree which is plantedi the midst of the paradise of God, and to drin of the pure river clear as crystal, that run through the street of the New Jerusalem. long to be refreshed with the fouls of them that are under the altar, who were flain for th word of God, and the testimony that they held and to have these long white robes given me that I may walk in white raiment with the glorious faints, who have washed their gar ments, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Why should I think it a strang thing to be removed from this place, to the where my hope, my joy, my crown, my elde Brother, my Head, my Father, my Comforter and all the glorious faints are, and wher the fong of Moles and the Lamb is fun joyfully; where we shall not be compelled t fit by the rivers of Babylon, and hang up on harps on the willow-trees, but shall take then up, and fing the new hallelujah, Bleffing, hon our, glory, and power, to him that fits upon th throne, and to the Lamb, for ever and ever What is there under the old vault of the hea vens, and in this old-worn earth, which i groaning under the bondage of corruption, tha should make me desire to remain here? I ex pect that new heaven and new earth, wherein righteousness dwelleth, wherein I shall rest fo evermore. I look to get entry to the New Jerusalem at one of these twelve gates, where upon are written the names of the twelve tribe

f Israel. I know that Jesus Christ hath preared them for me. Why may I not then, ith boldness in his blood, step into that glory, there my Head and Lord hath gone before c? Jesus Christ is the door and the porter; the then shall hold me out? O thou fairest anong the children of men, the delight of manind, the light of the Gentiles, the glory of he Jews, the life of the dead, the joy of angels nd faints, my foul panteth to be with thee. I efuse not to die with thee, that I may live with thee; I refuse not to suffer with thee, hat I may rejoice with thee. O when shall be filled with his love! Surely, if a man new how precious it is, he would count all hings but drofs and dung to gain it. I long for that scaffold, or that ax, or that cord, that night be to me that last step of this my weariome journey, to go to thee, my Lord. Who am that he should first have called me, and then constitute me a minister of the glad tidings of he gospel of salvation these many years, and now last of all to be a sufferer for his cause and kingdom? These two points, 1st, That Christ is the head of his church: 2dly, That she is free in her government from all other jurisdiction, except Christ; yea, as free as any kingdom under heaven, not only to convocate, hold, and keep her meetings and affemblies; but also to judge of all her affairs amongst her members and subjects: these are the cause of our sufferings. lwould be most glad to be offered up as a facrithe for fo glorious a truth; but, alas! I fear that my fins, and the abuse of so glorious things

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Veu ere ibe Yet my Lord doth know, if he would call me to it, and strengthen me in it, it would be to me the most glorious day, and gladest hours ever saw in my life; but I am in his hands, to do with me whatsoever shall please him.

This eminent saint spent much of his time in the mount of prayer and wrestling with God; was admitted to very intimate nearness with him, and had many secret things revealed to him from God. He used to say, "He wondred how a Christian could lie in bed all night, without rising to spend some of the night in prayer

and praise."

In his last illness he had a great weakness in his knees, caused by his continual kneeling at prayer, the siesh thereof became insensible, and hard like a fort of horn; but when in his weak ness he was desired to remit somewhat of his former painfulness, his answer was. "He had his life of God, and therefore it should be spent for him." During his sickness he was so silled with the sensible enjoyment of God, that he was sometimes overheard in prayer to have these words; "Lord, hold thy hand, it is enough, thy servant is a clay vessel, and can hold no more."

36. Mr Christopher Love, minister of Laurence-Jury, in London, who was beheaded on Fowerhill, August 22. 1651, in time of Cromwell's usurpation, and for suspected plotting against his government; his words on the scaffold were most pathetic and weighty.—"Although (said he) there be but little between me and death; yet

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triv is th cute his bears up my heart, there is but little beween me and heaven. It comforted Dr Taylor he martyr, when he was going to execution. hat there were but two stiles between him and his Father's house: there is a lesser way between me and my Fathers's house, but two steps between me and glory. It is but lying down upon that block, and I shall ascend upon a throne. I am his day failing towards the ocean of eternity. through a rough passage, to my haven of rest. through a red sea to the promised land. Methinks I hear God fay to me, as he did to Moses, Goup to mount Nebo, and die there; so to me. Go up to Tower-hill, and die there. Isaac faid of himself, that he was old, and yet he knew not the day of his death: but I cannot fay fo. lam young, and yet I know the day of my death; and I know the kind of my death, and the place of my death alfo. I am put to such a kind of death, as two famous preachers of the gospel were put to before me: John the Baptist, and Paul the apostle, they were both beheaded. I read also in Rev. xx. 4. The faints were be added for the word of God, and testimony of Jesus. But herein is the disadvantage which I lie under in the thoughts of many; they judge, that I fuffer not for the word of God, or for conscience, but for meddling with state-matters. To this I shall briefly fay. that it is an old trick of Satan, to impute the cause of God's peoples sufferings, to be con trivements against the state, when in truth, i is their religion and conscience they are perse cuted for. The rule s of Ifrael would hav

Yet my Lord doth know, if he would call me to it, and strengthen me in it, it would be to me the most glorious day, and gladest hour I ever saw in my life; but I am in his hands, to do with me whatsoever shall please him.

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put Jeremiah to death upon a civil account, though indeed it was only the truth of his prophefy that made the rulers angry with him: and yet upon a civil account, they pretend he must die, because he fell away to the Chaldeans, and would have brought in foreign forces to invade them. The same thing is laid to my charge, of which I am as innocent as Jeremiah was. So Paul, though he did but preach Jesus Christ, yet his enemies would have had him put to death, under pretence that he was a mover of sedition. Upon a civil account, my life is pretended to be taken away; whereas it is, because I pursue my covenant, and will not prostitute my principles and-conscience to the ambition and lusts of men. I had rather die a covenant-keeper, than live a covenant-breaker. Beloved, I am this day making a double exchange; I am changing a pulpit for a scaffold, and a scaffold for a throne: and I might add a third, I am changing the presence of this numerous multitude on Tower-hill, for the innumerable company of faints and angels in heaven, the holy hill of Zion; and I am-changing a guard of foldiers for a guard of angels, which will receive me, and carry me to Abraham's bosom. This scaffold is the best pulpit that ever I preached in: in my church-pulpit, God through his grace made me an instrument to bring others to heaen; but in this pulpit, he will bring me to neaven." Afterwards he faid, -- "Though my blood be not the blood of nobles, yet it is Christian blood, ministers blood, yea more, t is also innocent blood. I magnify the riches

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of God's mercy and grace towards me, that I who was born in Wales, an obscure country, and of obscure parents, should be singled out to honourable suffering. For the first fourteen year of my life I never heard a fermon preached; yet in the fifteenth year of my life, it pleased God to convert me. Blessed be God, who not only made me a Christian, but also a minister, judging me faithful, and putting me into the ministry, which is my glory. I had rather be a preacher in a pulpit, than a prince upon a throne; I had rather be an instrument to bring fouls to heaven, than that all nations should bring tribute to me.-Formerly (faid he) I have been under a spirit of bondage; yea, fometimes I have had more fear in drawing out a tooth, than now I have for cutting off my head. When fear was upon me, death was not near; now when death is near to me, my fear is evanished. ——I am comforted in this, though men kill me, they cannot damn me; though they thrust me out of the world, yet can they not that me out of heaven. When I have shed my blood, I expect the full declaration of there mission of fins through the blood of Jesus Christ. I am going to my long home, and ye to your fhort homes; but I shall be at my home, before ye be at yours."-He prayed, that feeing "he was called to do the work which he never did. he might have the strength which he never had."

Dr Wild, in his elegy, hath thefe lines.

Methinks I hear beheaded faints above Call to each other, Sirs, make room for Love.

Who when he came to tread the fatal stage, (Which prov'd his glory, and his en'mies rage) His blood ne'er run to's heart; Christ's blood was Reviving it; his own was all to spare; (there, Which, rising in his cheeks, did seem to say, Is this the blood you thirst for? Take't I pray. Spectators in his looks such life did see, That they appear'd more like to die than he. Light'ning, which sill'd the air with blazing light, Did serve for torches at that dismal night; in which, and all next day, for many hours, Heav'n groan'd in thunder, and did weep in Nor do I wonder that God thunder'd so, (showers: When's Boanerges murder'd lay below.

37. Mrs Joyce Lewis, being condemned to be burnt for the Protestant religion in queen Mary's reign, when she heard that the writ for her execution was come, she said to her friends, "As for death, I fear it not; for when I behold the amiable countenance of Jesus Christ my dear Saviour, the ugly face of death doth not much trouble me."

38. Bullinger of Zurich, in his fickness said to his friends, "If the Lord will make any furthere use of me and my ministry in his church, I will willingly obey him; but if he please (as I much desire) to take me out of this miserable life, I shall exceedingly rejoice, that he pleaseth to take me out of this corrupt and wretched age, to go to my Saviour Christ. For (said he) if Socrates was glad when his death approached, because (as he thought) he should go to Homor, Hesiod, and other learned

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men, whom he expected to meet with in the other world; how much more do ljoy, who am fure that I shall see my Saviour Jesus Christ, as also the saints, patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and all the holy men who have lived from the beginning of the world? Now, when I am sure to see them, and to partake of their joys, why should I not willingly die, to enjoy their perpetual society and glory?"

29. Mr Theodore Beza, a famous pastor in Geneva, when he apprehended the approach of death, revised his will; and so, easing himfelf of all worldly thoughts, wholly betook himself to expert the time of his departure, which he had much longed for. He oft used the apostle's saying, "We are his workman-ship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works." And that of Augustine, Domine quod capisti perfice, ne in portue naufragium accidat. "Lord, perfect that which thou haft begun, that I fuffer not shipwreck in the haven." And that faving of Bernard; Domine, Sequemur te, per te, ad te. Te, quia veritas; Per te, quia via: Ad te, quea vita. "Lord, we will follow thee, by thee, to thee. Thee, because thou art the truth; by thee, because thou art the way; to thee, because thou art the life."

40. Melancthon of Wittemberg, Luther's dear companion, said, "That he much longed to be dissolved; and that for two reasons: 1st, That he might enjoy the much-desired presence and sight of Christ, and of the heavenly church. 2dly, That he might be freed from the cruel and implacable discords of divines."

41. Mr John Bradford, a minister and martyr in queen Mary's reign, when the keeper told him, that the next day he was to be burnt in Smithfield, he put off his cap, and, lifting up his eyes to heaven, faid, I thank God for it, it comes not now to me on a sudden, but as a thing waited for every day and hour; the Lord make me worthy thereof." One Creffwell offering to interpose for him, and desiring to know what his request was, he faid, "I have no request to make; if the queen give me my life, I will thank her; if the will banish me, I will thank her; if the burn me, I will thank her; if the will condemn me to perpetual imprisonment, I will thank her." The chancellor preffing him to do as others had done, in hopes of the queen's mercy; he faid, " My lord, I defire mercy with God's mercy, that is, without doing or faying any thing against God and his truth. But mercy with God's wrath, God keep me from. -God's mercy (added he) I desire, and also would be glad of the queen's favour, to live as a subject without clog on conscience: but otherwise the Lord's mercy is better to me than life. Life in his displeature is worse than death, and death with his favour is true life."

In his letter to Dr Cranmer, Dr Ridly, and Dr Latimer, he hath these words; "Our dear brother Rogers hath broken the ice valiantly. This day, or to-morrow at the uttermost, hearty Hooper, sincere Saunders, and trusty Taylor, will end their course, and receive their crown. The next am I, who hourly look for the porter to open me the gates after them, to enter

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into the defired rest. God forgive me my unthankfulness for this exceeding great mercy. Though I suffer justly, (for I have been a great hypocrite, unthankful &c. the Lord pardon me, yea, he hath done it, he hath done it indeed), yet what evil hath he done? Christ, whom the prelates persecute, his truth which they hate in me, hath done no evil, nor deserved death. O what am I, Lord, that thou shouldst thus magnify me? Is it thy wont, to send for such a wretched hypocrite in a siery chariot, as thou didst send for Elias?"

In one of his mediations, after confessing of fin, faith he, "O what now may we do! despair? no, for thou art God, and therefore good; thou art merciful, and therefore thou forgivest fin: with thee there is mercy and propitiation, and therefore thou art worshipped. When Adam funed, thou gavest him mercy before he desired it; and wilt thou deny us mercy, who now desire the same; Adam excused his fault, and accused thee; but we accuse ourselves, and excuse thee; and shall we be sent empty away? How often in the wilderness didst thou spare Israel, and defer thy plagues at the request of Moses, when the people themselves made no petition to thee? Now we do not only make our petitions to thee, but also have a Mediator, far above Moses, to appear for us, even Jesus Christ thine own Son; and shall we (dear Lord) depart ashamed?-O merciful Lord, for thine own glory fuffer not the enemy of thy Son Christ, the Romish Antichrist, thus wretchedly to delude and draw from thee our poor breth-

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ren, for whom thy dear Son once died, & Suffer him not to seduce the simple fort with his fond opinion, that his false gods, his blind, mumbling, seigned religion, or his fooling superstition, doth give him such conquests, such victories, and such triumphs over us. But, to Lord, this is thy righteous judgment, to punish us with the tyrannical yoke of blindness, because we have cast away from us the sweet yoke of the wholesome words of thy Son our Saviour."

In his letter to Mrs Anne Warcup, he saith, My staff standeth at the door. I look continually for the sheriff to come for me; and I bless God I am ready for him.—Now go I to practise that which I have preached.—Now I am climbing up the hill; it will cause me puff and blow before I come to the cliff. The hill is steep and high, my breath is short, and my strength is feeble. Pray therefore to the Lord for me, that, as I have now through his goodness even almost come to the top, I may by his grace be strengthened, not to rest till I come where I should be."

He was fingular for humility and felf-abasement, though a most eminent saint. He subscribed some of his letters, The most miserable, hard-hearted, unthankful sinner, John Bradford. A very painted hypocrite, John Bradford. Miserrimus peccator, John Bradford. The sinful John Bradford.

42. Mr Edward Deering, a little before his death, said to his friends, "As for my death, I bless God I feel and find so much inward joy and comfort to my soul, that, if I were put to

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ny choice, whether I would die or live, I would thousand times rather choose death than life, f it may stand with the holy will of God."

d, Lord, I have hitherto feen but darkly in the glass of thy word; now grant that I may enjoy the eternal fruition of thy countenance, which I have so much defired and longed for. Haste, Lord, and do not tarry; I am weary both of nights and days: come, Lord Jesus, that I may come to thee. Break these eye-strings, and give me others; I desire to be dissolved, and to be with thee; haste, Lord Jesus, and defer no longer. Go forth, my weak life, and let a better succed. O Lord Jesus, thurst thy hand into my body, and take my soul to thyself. O my sweet Lord, set this soul of mine free, that it may enjoy her husband."

44. Galeacious Carracciolus, marquis of Vico, when a-dying, took his leave of his wife, and all his Christian friends, telling them, that he would lead them the way to heaven. And he cried to Jesus Christ, that "As he had sought him all his life, so now he would receive and

acknowledge him as his own."

45. The famous Lord Duplessis in France, when a-dying, was much concerned for the church of God in distress, praying earnessly for her deliverance. He particularly blessed such of his grandchildren as were following the studies of learning, saying, that he was assured they should be blessed with the blessings both of heaven above, and of the earth beneath." When a minister spoke of the service he had done the

church by his writings, he faid, "Alas, what 47. was there of mine in that work? Say not, that when it was I, but God by me." Then, lifting up his when hands above his head, he cried three times going Mercy, mercy, mercy." Adding, "that he re did it, to shew that it was the alone mercy of merc God to which he had recourse."—And declar. 48 ed, that his faith was altogether founded upon dying the goodness of God in Jesus Christ, who by the dreng Father had been made unto him, as to all others Alas! that believe in him, wisdom, righteousness, sauc. prese tisication, and redemption.—" Away (said he) beth with all merit; I call for nothing but mercy, free your mercy." When one was bleffing God for give ord ing him such peace and comfort at his end, he cernifaid, I feel, I feel, what I speak. As to his faith Mari of the truths of God, he faid, "He was entirely more persuaded thereof, by the demonstration of the God's holy Spirit, which was more powerful, more clear, and more certain, than all the demonstrations of Euclid." When secretly praying, he was overheard faying in broken fentences, "I fly, I fly to heaven. Let the angels and carry me to the bosom of my Saviour." Afterwards, he faid, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and I shall see him with these eyes, Hisce oculis;" which words he repeated four or five will times.

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46. Jerome of Prague, when he was fastened to the stake, and the executioner began to kindle the fire behind him, he bade him kindle it the " For (said he) if I had been wer before his face. afraid of it, I had not come to this place, have ing had so many opportunities offered me to Bay escape it."

47. Mr Hooker, a minister in New-England, when one that stood weeping at his bed-side, when he lay a-dying, said to him, Sir, you are going to receive the reward of all your labours; he replied, "Brother, I am going to receive

mercy."

48 Mr Heron, another minister there, when lying, and leaving a family of many small children; his poor wife fell a-weeping, and said, Alas! what will become of all these children? He melently and pleasantly replied, "Never fear; he that feeds the young ravens, will not starve the young Herons." And indeed it came to pass accordingly. It was an ancient observation con-Marian persecution, "That none of them went y more joyfully to the stake, than those who had the greatest families to commit unto the Lord." de (an Arian), fent a threatning message to him, (an Arian), sent a threatning message to him, he said, "Go tell her, Nil nist peccatum timeo, lear nothing but fin." When he was fententrouble me; for I said before within myself, If the empress will, let her banish me; the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof. If she e will, let her faw me afunder; Isaiah was bused: If she will, let her cast me into the ed lea; I will remember Jonah: If she will, let her cast me into a burning fiery furnace, or to it the wild beasts; the three children and Daniel were so served: If she will, let her stone me, or cut of my head; I have St Stephen and the Baptist for my companions. If she will, let

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her take away all my substance; Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I

return thither again."

But I must break off, for time would fail me to enumerate the many instances of the faith, love, patience, hope, courage, and constancy of the saints and martyrs of Jesus, when in the view of death. Some have told the persecutors, "That they might pull the hearts out of their bodies, but they could never pluck the truth out of their hearts." Others have said, "That if every hair of their heads were men, they should all suffer death for Christ and his truths,—Oh (said one of them) can I die but once fo Christ."

To conclude; let these examples prompt us to seek grace from God, and make it our earnest study to imitate and sollow such a Cloud of Witnesses, that we may die martyrs in resolution, our graces may be most lively at the last, our evening-sun may shine brightest, and we may go off the stage glorifying God, and leaving a sweet savour behind us, as these samous worthies, whose praise is in the churches, have done before us.

DIRECT. VII. Let dying persons be much in prayer and ejaculations to God.

PRAYER is the native breath of renewed fouls; it is as necessary to their spiritual life, as breath is to the natural life, Lam. iii. 56. "Hide not thine ear at my breathing." The first thing a child of God doth, when he is new-

born, is to breathe by prayer. Acts ix. 11. "Behold he prayeth." And it is also his last work in the world to pray, Acts vii. 59, 60. " And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and faying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this fin to their charge. And when he had faid this, he fell afleep." A dying Christian hath many to pray for; he is to pray for the church of God, for his friends and relations, and also for his enemies, as Stephen did; of which I spake before. But especially he must pray for himself, that sin may be forgiven, and that he may have safe conduct through the dark valley. I have heard of some that have been found dead upon their knees: a noble posture to die in! How agreeable is it, to enter praying into the land of praise? So did Stephen, yea, so did our bleffed Saviour himfelf; "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. Father, in to thy hands I commend my spirit.". The last words that holy Uher uttered were, "But, Lord, in special forgive my fins of omission." " Lord, (faid dying Beza), perfect that which thou hast begun, that I suffer not ship-wreck in the haven." Iremember to have read of an old minister, when he found death approaching, he faid, "I defire to die like the poor thief, crying to the crucified Jesus for mercy. I am nothing, lhave nothing, I can do nothing, except what is unworthy. My eye, and hope, and faith, is to Christ on his cross. I bring an unworthiness like that of the poor dying thief unto him, and

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have no more to plead than he. Like the poor thief crucified with him, I am waiting to be received by the infinite grace of my Lord, into his kingdom." Let us in like manner die, crying to a crucified Jesus for mercy. Lord, remember

me, now thou art in thy kingdom.

O dying Christian, remember the time of prayer is near an end; after death there will be no more occasion for prayer. O then beg that the spirit of prayer may be so poured down upon you at this time, that you may be enabled to pour out your heart before God, both for yourfelf and others. O how earnestly should you pray then, when you are taking your leave of prayer! Mind the example which your Redeemer gave you; it was before his death that he offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto God. I acknowledge, fick and dying persons are frequently out of case for making prayers of any great length or continuance, (which confideration should excite us to the greater diligence in prayer in the time of our health); and therefore they ought to be the more frequent and fervent, in short and suitable ejaculations and petitions to God, as their exigencies do require

Some MEDITATIONS and EJACULATIONS proper for sick and dying persons, and especially for a dying believer.

O LORD, thou art the God of my life, and hast the keys of death in thy hand. Thou hast measured the length of my life, and appointed the hour of my death. The number of

my months and days is with thee, and thou hast appointed the bounds over which I cannot pass.

What is my life but a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away? At the longest, how short is it! and at the strongest, how weak! "What man is it that liveth here, and shall not see death? When a few days are come, I will go the way whence I shall not return." God hath decreed it, sin hath deserved it, my frailty demonstrates it, death's harbingers proclaim it, and I must expect it.

There is no discharge in this war, no exemption from death's stroke. Death's messengers are come to warn me, that my last day and last hour draweth nigh. The sound of their master's feet is behind them. This clay-house must be dissolved, my soul dislodged, and my place here shall know me no more; I will be quickly as water spilt on the ground, that

cannot be gathered up again.

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O that I may be suitably exercised in my present weak and dying condition! When my sees faileth, and my heart fainteth within me, that God may be the strength of my heart, and portion for ever! When the keepers of the house do tremble, let God watch over it, and be the keeper of my soul! When the grinders do cease, because they are sew, let my soul be sed with manna from heaven. When the daughters of musick are brought low, let my soul be disposed for hearing the song of Moses and the Lamb, in the temple above. When these that look out at the windows are darkened, let the eyes of my soul be enlightened to

behold, with the dying martyr Stephen, the heavens opened, and the glorious Jesus standing on the right hand of God, making intercession for me, and ready to receive me. Let my hope and desire look out at the windows, and say, "Why is his chariot so long a-coming! and why tarry the wheels of his chariot? Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like a roe or a young hart on the mountains of Bether."

O that I may observe the afflicting hand of God in my present sickness! Surely affliction cometh not out of the dust, nor doth trouble ipring out of the ground. O Lord, rebuke me not in thine indignation, nor chasten me in thy hot displeasure. Have mercy on me, O Lord, forl am weak; and heal me, for my bones are vexed. When thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity, thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth: furely every man is vanity. The forrows of my heart are enlarged, O bring me out of my distresses. Look upon my affliction and my pain, and forgive all my fin. I look for sympathy to my great High Priest, who is touched with the feeling of my infirmities. My help and strength is in him.

O that, when I am afflicted, I may not defpise the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when I am rebuked of him! Let me hear the rod, and him that hath appointed it. Let me kiss the rod, and accept of the punishment of mine iniquity. O that in my affliction I may be helped to humble myself greatly before the God of my fathers, and make a true and geni-

tent confession of my sins!

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Oh! what shall I say to thee, O thou Preferver of men? I will fay, Lord, be merciful to me; heal my foul, for I have finned against thee. lacknowledge, that through an evil heart of unbelief, I have many a time departed away from the living God. O how vainly and foolifhly have I lived in the world! How lavish of my precious time! How unmindful of my latterend! How careless of my immortal soul! How little in preparation for eternity! Oh, my own heart condemns me, my fins testify against me; and thou who knowest them better than I do myself, together with their several aggravations, mightest justly condemn me too. But my comfort is, that with thee the Lord there is mercy, that thou mayest be feared; and with thy Son there splenteous redemption: wherefore, for his fake, be pleased to forgive me all my by-past transgressions, whether in thought, word, or deed, those I remember, and those I have forgotten, and et them neither be charged on me to my shame and confusion in this world, nor to my everlasting ruin in that which is to come. Lord, forgive the follies of my childhood, the extravagancies of my youth, and all the iniquities of my riper years.

Oh! I am polluted with fin, and dare not appear before God with my own filthy rags upon me. When Adam lost the garment of original righteousness, he fled from God, and dreaded he summons of offended justice. Now, there so appearing before God with acceptance, but in the garment of his Son my elder brother. Now can have boldness to enter into the holiest

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of all, but by the blood of Jesus O enable me to disclaim whatsoever duties I have performed, or graces I have exercised, and to rely on a crucified Christ alone for pardon and life. Though thou slayest me, let me die trusting in and cleaving to a crucified Jesus.

Now the powers of darkness will seek to raise tempest to shipwreck the vessel of my soul, when it would enter into the eternal haven; 0 that like the wise mariner, when the storm approacheth, I may endeavour to secure the vessel with the anchors of faith and hope fastened

on the Rock Christ!

O that, when the time of combat with my last enemy cometh, I may above all take the shield of faith, whereby I may be sheltered from the sting of death, and may quench the

fiery darts of the wicked one!

O that the Lord of hofts, the Captain of my falvation, may be with me in my last conflict, and may help me to put on the whole armour of God, and give me skill to use it, that I may be able to stand in the evil day! Teach my hands to war, and my fingers to fight, that through thee I may do valiantly, and tread down all mine emenies. O that now I may fo finish my course, and fight the good fight of faith, that at death I may receive the crown of righteousness, which the righteous Judge will give to all that love his appearing. O that my faith may ripen into a full affurance, that I may go off the stage with joy, and an abundant entrance may be administred unto me into the kingdom of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. O that the night of my death may shine bright with the sparkling stars of heavenly graces! Lord, increase my faith! let the pilgrim's staff of faith be never out of my hand, till I come to my journey's end. O let me get Christ all in my arms, like old Simeon before his death, that I may say, like him. "Now let thy servant depart in peace; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." Kindle the fire of heavenly leve in my soul, and give me a taste of heavenly leve in my soul, and give me a taste of heavenly joys. O for one beam of thy light, to banish away all my doubts and sears! Lord, let in something of heaven to my soul, before itself so into heaven.

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Lord, take me not out of this life till thou hast fitted me for a better. May I be fitted for leaven before I leave the earth, and finish my work before I finish my course! Make me ready to meet thee at thy coming, that so thy coming may not be the matter of my terror, but the matter of my hope, defires, and joyful expectations. O that I may be in a longing frame for that bleffed time, when he will come, and put a period to all my fins, forrows, troubles, and temptations here; and when I shall exchange my present being in the body, for an everlasting being with the Lord! Lord, strengthen my faith and hope, that fo neither the sweetness of life, the pain of death, nor apprehensions about my future state, may make me unwilling to die. Is my Redeemer ascended, and gone before me to prepare a place for me; why then should I be slothful to go in, and possess the good land?

Mercy hath filled up all my life, and brought me near to the end of it; O let it not leave me now, when all the enjoyments of the world are nothing to me, and I am to take an everlasting farewell of them all. Now one smile of thy face, one taste of thy love, would be strength and joy to my departing foul. O remember the word to thy fervant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope; hast thou not said, "I will never leave thee, nor for sake thee?" O fulfil this word to me in the time of my need. O let me never go off the stage with a heavy heart, or a guilty conscience; but may I depart in peace, and sleep in Jesus. Let me breathe out my departing foul to thee, and trust it in thy hand and fafe-keeping: and let my flesh rest in hope of rifing gloriously at the last day, through him who is the refurrection and the life, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Love and praise is the exercise of saints for ever; may I be acquaint with it here! O shall I not love and praise him, who hath forgiven all my iniquities, healed, all my diseases, redeemed my life from destruction, and crowned me with loving-kindness and tender mercies! He hath caused goodness and mercy follow me all the days of my life; and shall not I follow

him with praises at the end of it?

Now the time of my departure is at hand, and the lamp of life is ready to be extinguished. O that I may die in faith, that whether the lamp go out of its own accord, or by some sudden blast, it may be lighted again by the immortal beams of the Sun of righteousness! And and l avertion and the

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though I be overtaken with the fleep of death, and lie down in the bed of the grave; yet shall lawake again in the morning of the resurrection, that morning which shall never be succeeded by an evening; when I shall behold thy face in righteousness, and be eternally satisfied with

thy likeness.

Now I am going the way of all the earth, ready to launch forth into eternity, where I hall be fixed in my everlasting condition. Grant ne, Lord, the perfect use of my senses, of my reason and understanding, that I may glorify thy name, and edify my neighbours to the last moment of my departure. And now, when I am to conflict with the king of terrors, O support and affift me in my forest extremities and last agonies. O mercifully mitigate death's pangs, and let my paffage be easy, and my landing safe. Stand by me in my dying moments, and fuccour my foul in thy hands from all its deadly enemies. And when I am numbered among the dead, let me also be numbered among the redeemed and bleffed of the Lord for ever.

O Lord, thou determinest both the bounds of man's life, and the bounds of his habitation. If a hair of my head cannot fall to the ground without thy providence, far less can my whole body fall into the grave without it. Thou hast told me plainly, that I must die; but mercifully hast concealed the time, place, and manner, that I might always stand upon my guard, every hour expect thy coming, and have my accounts in my hand, always prepared to give them up to thee my Judge. Justly mightest thou have

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fnatched me away by a surprising call, and sudden stroke: but in thy goodness thou givest me warning, and time to tet my house and soul in order. O graciously sinish what is now wanting of the work of thy grace in my heart and soul, and throughly accomplish and surnish me to appear in thy blessed presence. May I now die to sin every hour, that I may not die for sin hereafter. Cause sin wholly to die before me, that it may not rise in judgment against me after death.

O God, be thou my refuge and strength, and a very present help in trouble; and then I will not fear though the waters of affliction rage, and be troubled, and though all the mountains of earthly comforts shake with the swelling thereof. There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God. O let my foul dwell beside these living streams, and drink of them for ever. In the valley of the shadow of death, Lord, be thou present as the good Shepherd with thy guiding rod, and supporting staff; and make my departure easy, and full of peace and hope. Lord, carry me fafe through the dark passage upon which I am entering, and let me find it a gate of glory, a door opened into the everlasting kingdom and joy of the Lord. Lord Isfus. receive my spirit, and let it be presented, justified, and spotless to the Father, that it may come to the spirits of just men made perfect, and join with them in finging the new fong, "Worthy is the Lamb that was flain, and hath redeemed us to God by his blood, to receive power, honour, glory, and bleffing for ever. Amen."

Some Meditations for drooping Believers, when death is near.

TRavellers, who have met with many storms, troubles, and dangers in their journeys, rejoice when they come near to their own country; and shall not I, a stranger and pilgrim, that hath been long wandering in a wilderness, be glad when I come near my blessed home, my dear friends, and sternal habitation?

With what cheerfulness do some women endure the pains of child-bearing, being suppored with the hopes of a child's being born in the world? And what is the joy of a man child being brought into this sinful and miserable world, to the joy of a fanctified soul's being brought out of it into heaven for ever? It is pleasant when the hard winter goeth over, the messengers of the spring, the singing of birds doth come: and shall not I rejoice, when sickness and forerunners of death do tell me, that the winter of my darkness and trouble is past, and the summer of my eternal light and joys is at hand?

What though death be the king of terrors? is not glorious Christ the King of comforts? Have not I met already with this blossed King; and why should I fear to meet with the other? Olet my strength and support at this time come from Christ, my covenanted Redeemer.

O Lord, deliver my foul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling! O bring me out of the miry clay, fet my feet upon a rock, and establish my goings, and put a

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new fong in my mouth, even praises to our God!

If Jacob went down so cheerfully into Egypt, when God hadsaid unto him, "Fear not to go down; for I will go down with thee, and I will bring thee up again;" why should a believer fear to go down to the grave, when God hath undertaken to go down with him thither, and to bring him up again? His body may be turned into dust, but God is in covenant with his dust, and will not suffer the least particle of it to be

Are not the righteous taken away from the evil to come? Do they not rest in their beds, and enter into peace? Why then should I grudge at dying? When the Lord is to bring heavy wrath and judgments upon a land, he frequently houseth many of his people in heaven before hand: and how happy are these that win the house before the sweeping hail-shower doth fall. A believer needeth not to look for any settled fair weather in this world: it will be nothing but one shower up, and another down, till he be housed in heaven. O why then should I linger in this wilderness!

How highly dignified is the believer, in being made an heir of God, and a joint heir with his own Son Jesus Christ! so that Christ and the believer do, as it were, divide heaven betwixt them; they have the same Father, dwell in the same house, sit at the same table, reign on the same throne, and partake of the same glory. O what honour is this, which is put upon a worm of the earth! It is indeed but little that the young heir enjoys of the inheritance while

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in this world; no more than will ferve to bear his charges to heaven, where he shall get all, forget his present straits, and remember his poverty no more. O why then should not I, like young heir, be looking and longing for the expiring of my minority, when I shall arrive at tipe age, and enter upon the full possession of the inheritance! O that I could send out faith and hope, these two faithful spies, to survey the promited land, or at least to visit the borders of my elder brother's country! what an encounging report would they bring back! My gorious Lord is gone, he hath left the earth, and entered into his glory; my brethren and friends have many of them arrived there also. How great is the difference betwixt my state and theirs! I am groaning out my complaints, but they are finging God's praise: I am in darkness, and cannot see God; but they are in light, and fee him face to face. O my Lord, shall I stay behind, when they are gone? Should 1 be fatiffied to wander in the wilderness, far distant from my Father and my God, when they are triumphing above, dividing the spoil? No, I will look still after them with a stedfast eye, and cry, O Lord, how long? I will wait now in hope. yea, rejoice in the forethoughts of the day, when my minority shall be expired, my pilgrimage finished, my banishment over, that I may get home to my country and friends above.

What though my days be dark and gloomy now, my winter be sharp and stormy? why, it is but short, and near over; the eternal summer approacheth: the long day, the high sun, and

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the fair garden of my well-beloved, above these visible lieavens, will quickly make amends for all. Let me get up by faith, and visit the new land, view the fair city, and behold the white throne, and the Lamb that sits thereon, that I may rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Shall many of the heirs of wrath go singing and rejoicing to hell; and will an heir of God go drooping and forrowing to heaven? Oh, let me not, by my behaviour on a death-bed, bring up a bad report upon Christ's good way, and

the land which he hath purchased.

Have I fueli great and precious promises lest me, and shall I not live and feed upon them in the time of my need? Shall I not trust the word of him that is faithful and true? Hath he not faid to me, "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee!" When the disciples were fore toffed with winds and waves, thou camest to them in the fourth watch of the night, walking on the waters; and when their fears were increased, thou faidst, " It is I, be not a afraid." Thou rebukedst the winds, and there presently followed a great calm. My Redeemer's compassions continue; his bowels are not that up this day, more than in the days of his flesh. " Jesus Christ is the same to-day, yesterday, and for ever."

Ah! I have too little improven my acquaintance with precious Christ in the day of my life! How ready am I to misken and mistake 10

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him, when he changeth his dispositions towards Though I have been long at Christ's me! school, what small proficiency have I made in the work and mystery of faith? How little have I learned to believe in the dark, and to drop an anchor at midnight upon the Rock of ages, and to look out for the dawning of the day? Surely the day shall break, and the shadows hee away: my King cometh, my well-beloved is on his way; he hath fent his letter before him to warn me of it, faying, "Behold I come quickly." O that like the cold and wearied night-watch, I may be looking out for the apof the morning-star, and the breaking of the eastern sky; and may be still crying, "Even 6, come Lord Jesus, come quickly."

Thou hast faid, "Light is fown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart." Surely God's feed shall not lie always beneath the clods; the time is at hand, when it shall firing; and joyful will the corp be at last. that, like David in affliction, I would encourage myself in the Lord my God, and say, "The Lord liveth, bleffed be my rock!" why should I droop, while my Lord liveth, and my rock flandeth? My hopes may die, my comforts may die, my gifts die, my riches die, my relations die, and my body die; but good news, "The Lord liveth, bleffed be my rock!" The disciples had a melancholy time while Christ was dead, and lying in the grave; but that fad time is over, he is now rifen, and will die no more. Nay, he hath proclaimed it for my comfort, faying, "Fear not, I am the first and the last. I am

he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, amen; and have the keys of hell and death."

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When my foul is cast down within me, let me remember God from the land of Jordan, and the hill Mizar; that I may reason myself out of all my fears and discouragements; for yet, "the Lord will command his lovingkindness in the day-time, and in the night his song shall be with me, and my prayer to the God of my life."

"Why then art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God."

Now, when death is at hand, let not my Saviour be far off. He who remembered the dying thief, and spoke comfortably to him, let him now remember me when he is feated in his kingdom, and fay to my foul, "This day thou shalt be with me in paradise." When it is abfent from the body, let it be present with the Let the angels now be ready to do their office, to carry my departing soul into Abraham's bosom. Let me now depart, that I may be with Christ; yea, be for ever with the Lord, that I may see his face. Let me dwell there, where they have no night, need no candle, nor light of the fun for ever: where God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither forrow nor crying.

Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit. By the hands of him who hath redeemed it, let it be presented to thee without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. An addition of some further Meditations proper for any sick person in the view of death.

THE Lord is pleased sometimes to cast men down on beds of sickness, and draw the curtain betwixt the world and them, that they may take a view of their by-past life, and suture state. Now is it time for me to look into my soul, and examine my state. Oh, how many do miss salvation, when they think themselves sure of it! They mistake a form of godliness for the power of it, and thereby deceive themselves, thinking themselves something when they are nothing.

Some come the length as to shed tears, as Esau did; profess fair, yea, fight for the Lord, as Saul and Jehu did; wish for the end of the righteous, as Balaam did; desire God's people to pray for them, as Pharaoh and Simon Magus did; walk softly, and mourn for fear of judgments, as Ahab did; joy in gospel-ordinances, and reform in many things, as Herod did; prophesy and speak well of Christ, as Caiaphas and Judas did; be convinced and tremble at hearing a sermon, as Felix did; yea, taste the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, as apostates have done: and yet for all these attainments, remain strangers to the saving work of the Spirit on the heart.

O that the confideration of hypocrites attainments might alarm me out of my security, and make me restless till I find the distinguishing marks of true grace, and sincere faith in my soul! O that I could say, there is a principle in

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me, that will not suffer me to build on any foundation in the world but Christ and his righteousness; that makes me content with Christ, with all his offices, with all his precepts, and with his very cross for his sake! Doth the love of Christ keep me back from sin, more than the law, or fear of hell? Have I aimed at God's honour in all my actions, civil, natural, and religious? Am I humbled, and denied to mine own will, wit, credit, ease, and honour, and to all the enjoyments of the world? Am I acquaint with the throne of grace, and desirous to keep up a constant correspondence with it? O let me not rest till I perceive these things in my soul which accompany salvation.

O how comfortable would it be to me now, if I could fay with good Hezekiah in his fickness, "Remember now, O Lord, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy fight?" O that I could pray, and say, with Jesus my Saviour, when in the view of death, "Father, I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do: and now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which thou hadst ordained for me before the world was!"

Alas, Lord, I must confess, my iniquities have gone up above mine head; my mispent time, my unfruitfulness under the means of grace, and waterings of ordinances, may cause me to cry out, Wo is me for the leanness of my soul, and barrenness of my heart! I have been an empty vine, bringing forth fruit only to myself. I have

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hid my Lord's money, and therefore deferve the doom of the wicked and flothful fervant. But my relief is in my Surety's righteousness. Bleffed be the Lord, who hath fent his Son to bless those who by nature lie under the curse, and to intercede for those that cannot speak for themselves. O how suitable is he to my soul's case! I have indeed a multitude of sins, but he hath a multitude of tender mercies; I have deep and heinous guilt, but he hath a deep fountain for washing it out; I am fold under sin, but he hath a ranfom to buy me back again; my fore is broad, but his plaister is answerable; my wound is great, but his balm is excellent. Surely it is my wifdom to go to Christ with all my grievances, and always to lie and cry at my Redeemer's door.

O that now, when the fun of my life is fetting, the bleffed Sun of righteoulness may arise and fine upon my foul! Goodness and mercy hath followed me while I lived; O that Christ and glory may meet me when I die! I must acknowledge thy goodness; were this the last hour I had to live, and this the last word I had to speak in the world, I behoved to say. Lord, thou hast been a merciful and gracious God to me; my whole life hath been a continued tract of mercy; Lord, crown the end of it with mercy also —Surely the sea is not so full of water, nor the fun fo full of light, as thou art full of grace and mercy. O let not my fins stop the the current of thy tender mercies at this time. Lord, drown all my fins in the fea of Christ's blood, that my foul may not be funk by them

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in the ocean of divine wrath. Lord Jesus, embrace my perishing soul in thy arms: let thy cross be my security, and thy wounds my resuge.

O thou that hearest the young ravens which cry, be not silent to me at this time, lest if thou be silent to me, I be like them to go down to

the pit.

Lord, I am now called to the work I never did; give me the strength I never had. Surely it is an important matter to die, and my eternal state dependeth upon dying aright. What I do amiss in my life one day, I may amend it in the next: but not so here, I can die but once; if I mar this piece of work, I cannot come back to mend it again; if I forget any thing necessary for my journy, I cannot return to fetch it. Oh, a wrong step in going out of this life is highly dangerous. In one respect it is like the sin against the Holy Ghost, and can never be forgiven: for I cannot come back to mourn for it. Of all the business I ever undertook, I have most need to take care of my dying.

Oh, is death coming to take dawn this earthly tabernacle, and to put the one half of me in the dark grave, and the other half of me in heaven or in hill; and shall I give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine eye-lids, till I find myfelf in that case, that I dare look death in the face, and dare hazard my soul upon eternity!

O to have right impressions of the certainty of death, and the uncertainty of life? What is my life but a vapour, a sand glass of sixty or seventy years, which will soon run out? Eternity and a judgment-seat are now hard upon

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me. The blast of the last trumpet is at hand. There will shortly be a proclamation by one fanding in the clouds that time shall be no more. -The world looks big in mens eyes in time of health; but when the eye-strings break, the breath turns cold, and the imprisoned foul looks out at the windows of the clay house, ready to leap out into eternity, can the world give any fatisfaction? No, no; a lamp full of oil will be valued then more than a house full of gold. The finest things on earth will then appear nothing but a piece of painted dust, and gilded clay. How gladly would the greatest worldling, then, give all his gold and filver, riches and honours, for one fight of Christ's fair face, one smile of his countenance? O wherefore should men in health neglect the market of grace, and flight the pearl of great price? Why should they spend their money for that which is not bread, and their labour for that which fatisfieth

Lord, fave me from the hypocrite's case at death, whose candle of profession and of hope burns and blazes fair all the way with him, but goeth out in the dark trance of death; and there he stumbles and falls, and shall rise no more. O that my profession and hope may be of God's creating! If God light my candle, then shall my feet be enlightened through the dark valley, and death nor hell shall not be able to put it out.

Lord, subdue sin in me, and let it be continually dying now, that it may certainly be dead before me. God sorbid that my sins should survive me!

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O that, when the stroke of death dissolves my body, my soul may escape as a bird out of the snare of the fowler, and may ascend to the heavenly regions to enjoy God himself.

Olet me look through the grates of mortality, and long for the jailor's coming to set me at liberty. God help me to overcome the love of life, and sears of death. If my neighbour lend me any thing, I pay it again with thanks; and shall I not restore my life to God with thanks, who hath been pleased to lend me it so long! Arise, and let me depart, for this is not my rest heaven is my home, Lord, bring me to it; the joys of it are too great to enter into me, 0 make me sit to enter into them.

While I lie on a fick-bed, Lord, help me to patience in my fickness without murmuring.

How willingly would the damned in hell endure my pains a thousand years, if they had my hopes of being saved at last! Blessed be God, that my sickness is not hell, that my pains are not eternal.

from the hand of him that is the Lord of health and of lickness, of life and of death; who killeth and maketh alive, bringeth down to the grave, and raiseth up again? That soverign and wise Lord hath determined the time when my affliction shall end, as well as the time when it began. Thirty-eight years were appointed the sick man at Bethesda pool; eighteen years the woman that Satan kept bound; twelve years to the woman with the bloody issue; ten days tribulation to those of Smyrna; three days pleague to

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David. The number of the godiy man's tears s registered in God's book; yea, the hairs of this head are numbered

When David got his choice of his own chafisement, he chose rather to be corrected by he hand of God, than by any other means, laying, " Let me fall into the hands of the Lord, for his mercies are great." I was dumb, and opened not my mouth, because thou didst s, it. Glory to God, that I am fallen into his merciful hand. Hath God appointed, that man's coming into the world shall be attended with pain and crying, and his going out of it with grief and trouble; and shall I quarrel at it? No, I defire humbly to underly the correction of mine iniquitiy, and to bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him. O that the sickness of my body may be a means of health to my soul! May I be chastned of the Lord, so that I may not be condemned with the world!

It is good for the believer that he is afflicted, why? it springs from divine love, and it works for his foul's good. Affliction is a seal of his adoption, and no sign of reprobation. The purest gold is oftest tried, the sweetest grape is nardest pressed, and the truest Christian is heaviest crossed. But O how soon will the Christian forget all his groans when he comes to heaven? As foon as Stephen saw Christ, though at a distance, he forgot all his wounds and bruises; he minded no more the terror of the stones about his ears, but sweetly yielded his foul into his Redeemer's hands.

I read of many in the gospel, that by sicknes-

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ses and diseases were driven unto Christ, who, if they had enjoyed health and prosperity, would have neglected, like many others, to come to him. O blessed is that cross, that draweth a sinner to Christ, to lay open his own misery, and implore Christ's mercy. And blessed be that Christ, who never resuleth the sinner that cometh to him, though driven by affliction and misery. To whom shall such a distressed creature as I go, but to him who is the only physician, that can both cure my soul from sin, and my body from sickness?

Lord, thou never deniedst thy mercy to any finner that asked it with a penitent heart. There were many forts of fick finners that came to thee in the days of my flesh; the blind, the deaf, the lame, the lepers; theiethat were fick of palsies, dropfies, fevers, fluxes, and were possessed with devils: and yet never one of them came crying for mercy, that went away without his errand, were his fin never so great, his disease never so grievous. Nay, so merciful is my Redeemer, that he offered and gave his mercy to many that never asked it, being moved with the bowels of his own compassion, and the fight of their mifery; so dealt he with the woman of Samaria, the widow of Nain, and the man that lay thirty-eight years at the pool of Betheida. Oh, if he gave his mercy so willingly to them that did not ask it, and was found of them that faught him not, will he deny mercy to my foul that is crying for it?

There is but a step betwixt me and death; Lord, scal my pardon to me, before I go hence, and be no more. O draw nighto me, and fave me: for my foul is full of trouble, and my life draweth nigh unto the grave. Thy loving-kindness is better than life; O make me sure of that, and I will willingly part with this mortal life.

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O thou who willest not that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance; be pleased to make use of the chastisement of my body, as a medicine to cure my foul, and bring me to a true and fincere repentance. One day is with thee as a thousand years; O work in me in this, which may be my last day, whatsoever thou feest wanting in me. Enable me to present unto thee the facrifice of a broken and contrite heart, which thou hast promised not to despise. Give a true and lively faith in the the bleffed Jefus, who is the propitiation for our fins! He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him; O heal me by his stripes. Let the cry of his blood drown the clamour of my fins. I am indeed a child of wrath, but Christ is the Son of thy love; O pity me for his fake, and let my foul find fanctuary in his wounds.

O Lord, the waters of affliction are come in even unto my foul; O let the Spirit of God move on these waters, that, like the pool of Bethesda, they may cure whatever spiritual discases thou seest in me. O Lord, consider my affliction, accept my tears, assuage my pain, increase my patience, and finish my troubles. Correct me with the chastisement of a Father, and not with the wounds of an enemy; and

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take away thine anger.

Lord, the prince of this world cometh, 0 let him have nothing in me; but, as he accuseth do thou absolve. I have nothing to say for my felf, but be thou my advocate, Lord; and do thou answer for me. I am clothed with filthy garments, and Satan stands at my right hand to refift me; O Lord, rebuke him, and pluck me as a brand out of the fire. Cause mine iniquities to pass from me, and clothe me with the righteousness of thy dear Son. I know. O Lord, that no unclean thing can enter into thy kingdom, and thou feeft I am nothing but pollution, yea, my very righteousness is filthy rags: O wash me, and make me white in the blood of the Lamb, that I may be fit to stand before thy throne. O take me from the tents of Kedar, to the mansions of light and purity. When my earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolved, O let me have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heawens. O bring my foul out of prison, that I may eternally give thanks unto thy name. Amen.

CHAP. VIII.

Containing Directions to the friends and neighbours of the sick who are themselves in health for the time.

WHEN the Lord sends sickness and affliction to our neighbours, we ought not to d.

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pensations; but we should hearken to the voice of God's rod upon others, and consider what it is that the Lord is calling for at our hands. These following directions may be useful to those that are in health.

DIRECT I. Be very thankful to God for the great mercy of health and strength, and improve it to his glory.

CURELY an healthful person liath still great Deause to be a thankful person. Health is a mercy that doth feason and sweeten every other temporal mercy; without it the greatest wealth and honours, nay, a king's crown, can give no satisfaction. It is far more eligible to be a healthy beggar than a fickly king. What comfort could it afford us, under tofling fickness, and tortering pains, to have the greatest heaps of money to look to, or thousands coming to pay us homage; alas, for our unthankfulnels to him who is the God of our health! How little do we prize his goodness, in continuing with us such a long tract of health and strength, together with the use of our reason and senses, when many others are deprived of them. Surely God were righteous, should he teach us to value the worth of these mercies by the want: of them.

Let us consider how many miserable persons there are in the world, and who it is that maketh us to differ from them; how many diseased, distracted, deformed, lame, blind, deaf, and

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dumb people, there are; and how easy it had been for God to have put us in their condition, and them in ours. The difference is not owing to any thing in us: their fins are not greater than ours. Had we a due sense of our sins and ill-deservings, we would acknowledge ourselves unworthy of the least of all God's mercies; we would reckon every common mercy a special bleffing, and an unmerited favour to us .- Again, let us take a view of the fainting fickness, racking pains, and reftless nights of others. Let us look upon our fick friends sweating and burning under fevers; let us hear them groaningand moning under strong pain. "Their foul abhors all manner of meat, and they draw near unto the gates of death." Sometimes we fee them panting and fainting, and not able to fpeak a word to us. And what is the language of all this to us? Is it not, that we should thankfully adore our gracious God, and bless and magnify him, for his distinguishing goodness to us? O how much are we bound to the Lord, that it is not fo with us as with others! while wearisome nights are appointed to them, and and their bones are full of toffing; all the comforts of this life are tasteless to them, their friends are weeping about them, but cannot help them: "It is far otherwise with me, (may you fay), my mercies and relations are comfortable and helpful to me, I relish my food, my bed gives me ease, my sleep is refreshing: I have freedom to read and pray, meditate and attend the public ordinances. Praise the Lord, O my foul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Forget not this benefit of

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health, that is the chief of all my outward bleffings. Some would part with all their worldly wealth, to have so much bodily health as I have. Long have I undervalued and abused this choice mercy of health: O that I could mourn for my neglect, and resolve in God's strength to improve my remaining health, for the praise and service of that merciful God who is the author and preserver of it! Let me spend and be spent for God, that gives me all my health and strength for his glory. Let me abhor the ingratitude of those who employ the health which God giveth, in the service of his enemies; and make a facrifice of it to the devil, the world, and the flesh. O what prodigious folly are these guilty of, who, for satisfying their fenfual appetite, do often deprive themselves of health, which is in itself a thousand times of more value than all their brutish pleafures! God help me to prize this mercy, that can never be prized enough."

DIRECT. II. Make conscience of visiting your sick friends and neighbours, believing that it is your duty and interest so to do.

Visiting of the sick is not only the duty of the ministers of Christ, but likewise of all the members of Christ: for we are all enjoined to remember them that are in adversity, and to sympathize with the afflicted, as being ourselves also in the body. "To him that is afflicted, pity should be shewn by his friends," saith Job. And our Lord gives it as a character of those

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whom he will own and acquit at the great day, Matth. xxv. 36. "I was fick, and ye visited me." This is the way to be like him, who is the Father of mercies, and whose soul was grieved for the miseries of Israel, Judg. x. 16. We read how tenderly David sympathized with his enemies when they were sick, Psal. xxxv. 13, 14, and much more ought we to visit and sympathize with our sick friends. To visit the prosperous and healthy, is an act of courtesy and civility; but to visit the afflicted and sickly, is

an act of charity and Christianity.

And as it is your duty, so it is your interest and advantage to visit the sick. The wise man tells you, Eccles. vii. 2. " It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to the house of feasing." King Joash went to see Elisha in his sickness, and wept over him; and he lost nothing by so doing, 2 Kings xiii. 14. for he obtained thereby three famous victories over the Syrians. Though it be not warrantable to enquire at the dead, Deut. xviii. 11. yet we may learn many wholeiome lessons from the dying, and even though they be speechless. As for instance, we may hereby be instructed how to prize health, mind our own frailty, and provide for the time of fickness. When we behold their strength languishing, their tongues faultering, their eyes failing, their countenance pale; we should think with ourselves, "This will be my case ere long: the next arrow that death shoots, may be levelled at me: how much is it my concern to prepare for it!" Also we may think, what a bitter thing fin is, that is the cause of all these d

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nains and distresses, and how mad they are who love fin and take pleasure in it .- We may see likewise the great folly of courting and trusting the world, which leaves the fick and dying man in the time of the greatest extremity. - And we may observe, how happy the man is, that hathan interest in Christ, the peace of a good conscience, and a well-grounded hope of heaven; to yield support and confidence to him under his strugglings with-sickness and death. When we hear the dying man's complaints of his fins, and his lamenting his neglect of duty, and mifpending of precious time, we may learn repentance and reformation. When we observe their professions of love to Christ, and their hope in him to the last, it doth contribute to the quickening and strengthening of our faith. A right fight of dying persons, is a good mean to increase the Spirit of grace and supplication in us. We may fitly allude here to the answer which Elijah gave to Elisha, when he sought a double portion of his Spirit, 2 Kings ii. 10. " If thou feeft me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee." A double portion of the Spirit shall be the allowance of these who make conscience of this duty.

DIRECT. III. Let the friends of the fick, and these who visit them, deal faithfully with them about their souls.

Consider, this may be the last opportunity you may have of doing any thing for your friend's soul. If he die, he is fixed in his everlasting state, so that all advices and counsels

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then will be fruitless. It is now, or never, you must exert yourself for your friend's advantage; there is no knowledge nor wisdom in the grave, to which he is going, "God's loving-kindness cannot be declared in the grave, nor his faithfulness indestruction," Psal. lxxxviii.

11. Now is the proper time for doing good to your neighbour's soul. When affliction opens the ear to discipline, be careful to drop in wholesome instructions into it; and when the heart is made tender by sickness, it is a fit season for good counsel to make impressions on it. Let the opportunity then be improven with faithfulness and prudence. And, in order thereto, observe the following advices

I. Labour to know the fick man's spiritual condition, that your applications may be suitable thereunto. The knowledge of the disease is previously requisite unto the cure: as the mistake of a physician about a man's disease may be as dangerous as the disease itself; so here it is highly dangerous to mistake the case of the sick man's soul; for then lenitives may be applied, when corrosives are needful; promises may be administred, when threatnings are more proper.

II. Beware of flattering the fick with vain hopes of life, when he is more likely to die; lest he be thereby tempted to delay or stacken his preparation for another world. It is fit that plainness be used with respect to his danger, that he may be quickened to his work.

III. The fick person is to be admonished and told, that sickness comes not by chance, nor by second causes merely; but by the wise direction

and special providence of God: that sometimes God smites, out of displeasure for sin, and for the sinner's correction and amendment; and sometimes for the trial and exercise of his peoples graces: that the sharpest afflictions shall work together for good to them that love God, and are rightly exercised under God's hand: that it is a great mercy to a sinner, when God by his rod gives him warning and space to repent, and slee to the blood of sprinkling, and to cry to God for pardon; and doth not snatch him out of the world by a sudden death. Upon which account the voice of the rod should be carefully hearkened to, and thankfully obeyed.

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IV. If the fick person be ignorant, he is to be catechifed and instructed in the principles of religion, especially concerning his faith and repentance, and his uptaking of the covenant of grace, and the method of pardon and falvation. through the righteousness of Christ apprehended by faith. And it may be proper to demand his affent to some of the fundamental truths of Christianity, or his answer to such questions as these: 1st, Do you believe in God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, one God in three persons, the maker and governour of the world? 2dly, Do you believe that Jesus Christ, who assumed our nature, obeyed the law, died on the crofs, rose from the dead, and ascended to heaven, is the eternal Son of God, and the only Saviour of finners? 3dly, Are you sensible that you are a loft sinner by Adam's fall, and, besides that, guilty of innumerable actual fins; and that you have broken God's holy commandments in

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thoughts, words, and deeds, and for fo doing, do deserve God's wrath both in this life and that which is to come? 4thly, Are you truly grieved and forry for breaking God's law, negleeting his worship, mispending your time, and pursuing the vanities of the world? And would you do as you have done, or live otherwise, if you were to begin your life again? 5thly, How do you think to get your guilt removed, your fins pardoned, and your peace made up with God? Are you desirous from your heart to be reconciled to God through Jesus Christ, the bleffed Peace-maker? 6thly, Do you heartily approve of the gospel-method of reconciliation, by the righteousness and sacrifice offered up by the Lord Jesus Christ, as your surety, in your name and stead? And is your foul defirous to chuse and accept of Christ for your Mediator and Saviour, in all his offices, of Prophet, Prieft, and King? 7thly, Do you renounce all confidence in any other, all dependence on your own duties and righteousness, and put your whole trust and confidence in Christ, and the merits of his blood, faying, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none in earth that I defire besides thee." Do you believe that there is no falvation in any other; and that there is no name under heaven whereby you can be faved, but Jesus Christ only? 8thly, Do we desire to be wholly renewed and fanctified by virtue of Christ's blood, and to shew forth the reality of your faith by good works and a holy life for the time you have to live in the world? And, as an evidence thereof, are you willing to re51

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flore what you have taken wrongfully from any, and to forgive all wrongs done to you by any, and to cast out all malice or hatred you have borne to any, and ask forgiveness of any you have injured? 9thly, Do you believe that Christ is coming at the last day to judge all the world, both the quick and the dead, whom he shall then raise from the grave, and that your dead body shall rise with the rest? 10thly, Do you believe the immortality of the soul, and its living in a separate state after death, and that the souls of believers do immediately pass into glory, where they shall be ever with the Lord?

V. In dealing with the fick you are to separate betwixt the precious and the vile, and make a difference betwixt the converted and the unconverted. And seeing different applications are requisite, you are, according to your knowledge, to study to suit your counsels, admonitions, and prayers, to their state and condition; not using the same words to the ungodly as you use to the godly, lest you slatter them with ill-grounded hopes that their state is safe, while they are strangers to a work of regeneration. That great truth is to be declared to all, that, "unless, a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." O it is dangerous to speak peace, where God speaks war.

VI. If the fick person seem to be secure, or have not a due sense of his sins; endeavours must be used to convince him of the guilt, pollution, and danger of them, in order to his humiliation. Presumptuous sinners are not to

be flattered, lest we betray their souls into eternal ruin, and so their blood be required at one hand. No fond love, no slavish fear, must keep us from telling them the hazard of their present state. The secure conscience must be awakened to see the demerit of sin, and the terribleness of the justice of a sin-revenging God before whom no Christless impenitent sinner can stand: this is necessary in order to a sinner's discovering his lost case in himself, and his seeing to Christ for refuge. It is God's method first to cast down the soul before he list it up to plow the heart by conviction, before he case in the seed of consolation.

VII. If the fick person hath studied to walk uprightly, but is at present discouraged upon ac count of the sharpness of the rod, Satan's temptations, the guilt of fin, fear of death, or the like; then suitable counsels, resolutions, and comforts, are to be tendered, in order to his fettlement and support. Particularly he may be told, that sharp rods are no-wise inconsistent with divine love; nay, frequently, they are a fight of it: for as standing waters turn corrupt, be cause they have no current; and these who are not poured from veffel to veffel, their tafte re mains and their scent is not changed: therefore God, in order to take away the scent of the cor rupt nature from us, is pleased to change u from state to state, by crosses and sickness, to falvation. And as Noah's ark, the higher it was toffed with the flood, the nearer it mounted to wards heaven; fo the fanctified foul, the more it is exercised with affliction, the nearer it is

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ifted towards God. Again, it is proper to fet efore him the freeness and fulness of God's race, the sufficiency of righteousness in Christ, nd his rich and gracious offers in the gospel. which we are affured, that all who repent and believe with all their heart in God's mercy brough Christ, renouncing their own righteousnels, shall not perish in their sins, but have life and salvation in him; and that believers in Christ are assured of victory over Satan, death, and all their enemies, because Christ their head hath by his cross conquered the devil, unstinged leath, triumphed over the grave, and obtained victory for all his members; so that neither ife nor death, principalities nor powers, shall eable to separate them from God's love in Christ.

VIII. If a fick man be so tempted and trouled in conscience, that he is in hazard of dispairing of God's mercy; it is necessary to inform him of the greatness and infiniteness of God's mercy; that the most notorious sinners have been pardoned and faved by it, and it is fill offered in the gospel to the vilest of sinners. Though God forefaw all the fins which the world would commit, yet these did not hinder him from loving the world fo, that he gave his only begotten Son to death, to fave as many s would believe and repent: fo that the fins of one man can never hinder God from loving his foul, and forgiving his fins, when he fince eydefires to repent and believe. The cry of the most grievous fins that are recorded (fuch as these of Sodom) could never reach higher than unto heaven, Gen. xix. 13. But David as-

fures us, Pfal. cviii. 4 that the mercy of Godi great, and reaches higher than the heavens so that is overtoppeth the greatest of all our fins. If the mercy of God be greater than al his works, it must furely be greater than al our fins .- Again, lay before him the infinit virtue of Christ's blood: why? it is not the blood of a mere man, but the blood of God Acts xx. 28. And are there any fins f great, or guilt fo heinous, but the blood of Go can wash away? This was godly Cranmer' Support that day he suffered martyrdom, whe his fin of renouncing the Protestant doctrin stared him in the face: "Surely (faid he) God wa made flesh, and shed his blood, not for lesser sin only, but for greater fins also." He was fadly di couraged, and wept abundantly, till he eye this meritorious blood; and then he took hear and died with courage. O this price was f great, that it could have merited pardon for th fins of all the devils in hell, as well as of a the men on earth, though every one of then had been red as crimfon. Yea, the least dro of this blood is of more merit to procure th mercy of God for our salvation, than all ou fins can be of force to provoke the wrath of God for our damnation; why, the greatest of our fins are but the fins of a man, but the lea drop of Christ's blood is the blood of God.

Moreover, Let him be put in mind of the willingness and readiness of our Redeemer to receive all sinners that came to him in the day of his slesh, though driven to him by sickness and affliction: so that he never put any of the away without their errand, that came cryin

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for mercy. Nay, he many times fought out objects for his mercy, that were not thinking of coming to him, as shewed before. Observe the gentleness of our Lord's carriage to Judas himself, in calling him Friend, after his most treacherous dealing, Matth xxvi. 50. "Friend, (said he), wherefore art thou come?" Had wretched Judas laid hold on the word Friend, out of the mouth of Christ, as Benhadad did the word Brother from the mouth of Ahab; doubtless Judas should have found the God of sfrael more merciful than Benhadad found the king of Israel.

Lastly, Let him consider, that to dispair of God's mercy, casts the greatest dishonour upon the divine Majesty, and is a sin more heinous than all the sins which we have before committed: why, it doth charge the great God as guilty of perjury, who hath solemnly sworn, that he desires not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should repent and live, Ezek. exxiii 11. God was more displeased with Cain for despairing of his mercy, than for murdering his brother; and with Judas for hanging himself, than for betraying his Master: why, because that by their despair they would make the sins of mortal men greater than the infinite mercy of the etenal God.

DIRECT. IV. Be earnest in prayer to God for your friends when sick or dying. Pray with them and for them.

F Requently fick persons are so disquieted with pain and trouble, that they are out of case to pray for themselves, and therefore they have

the more need of the prayers of others. David fasted and prayed for his enemies when they were fick, Pfal. xxx.13.; much more ought we to pray for our friends in that case. Never did they need our prayers fo much, as when they are called to enter upon an unchangeable condition, to go to their long home, even that place wherein they must abide for ever. Now they are in the land of prayer, and it is now or never that you must pray and beg mercy for them. When their life is gone, they go from the land of prayer, and is fixed in that place whence they shall never remove: then all your prayers and cries for them will be in vain. If your friend be a stranger to Christ, he is on the brink of hell, and knows it not; and will you not cry to God to open his eyes, and fave him from falling into that devouring pit, out of which there is no redemption? You would be willing to fit up a whole night for the relief of his body; and will you not spend a part of a night for the good of his foul, that is a thoufand times more valuable? Now the question is, whether this precious foul shall be Christ's or the divel's for ever? And when will you wreftle for your friend, if you do it not now? If the fick person be a child of God, you may pray with him with the more comfort, and expectation to be heard. You may, in that case, send the same message by prayer to Christ, that the fifter of fick Lazarus did, John xi 3. "Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest, is sick." Lord, pity him, comfort him, abate his distemper, and relieve him from it, if it be thy will: if

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not, grant him thy gracious presence and safe conduct through the Jordan of death, and a

happy landing in the Canaan of glory.

We are told, that the prayers of the righteous, in such cases, doth avail much, James v.
16. and this to encourage us to pray one for
another. Whatever be the sick person's condition, such confessions and petitions as these following may be made use in prayer for him.

Petitions for the Sick.

LORD, thou first breathedst into man the breath of life; and when thou takest away that breath, he dies, and returns again to his dust. May we be duly sensible of our dependence on thee for all that we enjoy. We acknowledge, that our great abuse of the many days of heath and welfare thou affordest us, doth justly deserve the visitation of sickness and difeases. Wo's us, we lie under a burden of fin, both original and actual: we are all children of wrath by nature, and under the curse of a broken law; and all other miseries temporal and spiritual, distempers, pains, death, and hell itself, are the iffies thereof. Be merciful to the fick person under thy hand; discover to him his fins, and the cause why thou contendest with him. Make him fee that he is lost in himself. and wholly unable to fatisfy the demands of offended justice; and do thou reveal Christ to his foul for righteousness and life. O give him thy holy Spirit to create and strengthen faith, that he may lay hold on Christ as offered in the

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gospel; work in himthe grace of true repentance. Enable him to fearch his heart, and try his ways, so as he may discover every accursed thing, every Achan in the camp, that hath provoked the Lord against him. When thou put. test him in the furnace, be pleased to stand by it, and overfee the metal while it is melting in it. Try him as filver is tried, and bring him out purified, and let him lose nothing in the furnace but his drofs. Remove his fins from thy presence as far as east is from the west, that they may never trouble his conscience, nor rise in judgment against his soul. However bitter the cup may be, let it be medicinal to cure all the diseases of his soul. O that these afflictions, which are but for a moment, may work for him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, through Jefus Christ the purchaser!

Look down from heaven, the habitation of thy holinness, behold his affliction and his pain, and forgive all his fin. Shew fuch pity to him as a father doth to his child, and lay no more upon him than he is able to bear. Lord, give patience and strength answerable to the burden of trouble thou hast laid on him. In time of his weakness, uphold him by thy strength. Relieve his wants out of thy infinite fulncis. Lord, thou knowest his frame, and rememberest that he is dust; save him from extremity of trouble; either abate his pain, or increase his patience to endure what thou measurest out to him. Give him the evidences of all the graces of thy Spirit. Arm and defend him against all the suggestions and temptations of Satan. Take his heart wholly off the world, and set his affections on things above.—Lord, make use of this chastisement of his body as a medicine to cure his soul, by drawing his soul, that is sick of sin, to thyself. O enable him in a penitent believing manner to come by repentance to Christ his soulphysician, to get it healed of all its maladies. Sanctify his sickness, and let the fruit of it be to purge away his sin.

If God shall be pleased to add to his days, bless all means of his recovery. Remove the disease; renew his strength both outward and inward; heal his soul as well as his body. And enable him to walk tenderly before God, and carefully to remember and perform such vows and promises of obedience as men are apt to

make in time of fickness.

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If God hath determined to finish his days by the present visitation; let him find such evidence of the pardon of his fins, of his interest in Christ, and eternal life, as may cause his inward man be renewed, while his outward man decayeth; that he may meet death without fear, cast himfelf wholly on Christ without doubting, and defire to be diffolved, that he may for ever be with Jesus Christ. - Lord, make his last works better than his first, and the day of his death better than the day of his birth. Make his last words his best words, his last thoughts his best thoughts, and his last hour his best hour. O let him die the death of the righteous, and let his last end be like his. Let the eyes of his foul be opened to fee his fins and his Saviour, before the eyes of his body be shut by death. Take

away the sting of death, the guilt of sin, that he may walk through the valley of the shadow of death, and fear no evil. Open thou his lips that his mouth may shew forth thy praise, be fore he go to the place of silence. And when his strength doth fail, and his tongue is not able to utter words. let the blood of Christ speak for him in heaven: and let thy holy Spirit within him make requests for him with fighs and groans that cannot be uttered .- When the figh of his eyes doth fail him, let the eyes of hi faith be strengthened, that his foul (with Steph en at his death) may behold Jesus Christ is heaven ready to receive him. Lord, stand by him in his last conflict with his enemies, Satar and death, that he may overcome both, and b more than a conqueror through Christ that had loved him. Into thy hands we commend his spirit

Lord, teach us who do survive, by this and other like daily spectacles of our mortality, to see how frail and uncertain our condition is and so to number our days, that we may seriously apply our hearts to heavenly wisdem.

through Jesus Christ. Amen.

DIRECT. V. Be careful to furnish your friend with suitable company, and spiritual converse when they are sick or dying.

As worldly company and converse are greathindrances, so spiritual company and converse are special helps to the sick and dying Now, that the friends of the sick may prevent the one, and provide the other, let the following advices be remembered.

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esp pre dea wills, and dispatch the settlement of their worldly affairs, that so they may not be disturbed at the last, nor any wise diverted from their main work, by thoughts or discourses about the world. A mind abstracted from the world is a most suitable disposition for a dying man. You cannot carry the things of this world with you when you go hence; and it is not fit you should carry the thoughts of them.

as much as possible, and all these that would divert them by idle or worldly discourse. It is both impertinent and cruel, to throw in such impediments in the way of those that are go-

ing speedily to their endless state.

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3dly, Do what you can to get faithful ministers and godly Christians to be much about them, who are fit to instruct and counsel them about their soul's matters, and also to pray with them and for them.

their chief work, and these things which belong unto their peace. Whatever be their state, whether gracious or graceless, it is proper to be minding them, 1. Of the vanity and emptiness of the world, that can neither give ease to the body, nor comfort to the soul, when either of them is in trouble. 2. Of the sinfulness of sin which is the spring of all diseases and miseries whatever. 3. Of the preciousness and usefulness of Christ to a sinner in all cases, and especially at a dying hour. 4. Of the inexpressible selicity of believers in Christ after death, &c.

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Lastly, If you think yourselves not able to instruct or advise your sick friends as they stand in need, then read some good book to them, that may be suitable to the condition of their fouls; and, if you have not a fitter at hand, read some chapters or directions of this book to them, as you may fee most proper for them. But, above all books, read to the fick the holy scriptures, particular chapters and Psalms there, fuch as the three last chapters of Gen ;—the last chapter of Deuteronomy; -the 17th chapter of the first book of Kings; and 2d chapter of the 2d book of Kings;—the 14th and 19th chapters of Job;—the Pfalms of David; and particularly the 6th, the 23d, 25th, 30th 38th, 41st, 42d, 49th, 51st, 71st, 73d, 77th, 88th, 89th, 90th, 103d, 116th, 118th, 130th, 142d, 143d, and feveral other Pfalms .-- the 12th chapter of Ecclesiastes;—the 38th, 53d, 54th, and 55th chapters of Isaiah;—the three last chapters of Luke; -- the 14th. 15th, 16th, 17th, and 20th chapters of John;—the 8th chapter of the Romans;—the 15th chapter of the 1st Cor.; -the 5th of the 2d Corinth.—the 4th of 1st Thest.—the 11th and 12th of Heb —the three last chapters of the Revelation; and the like.

DIRECT. VI. Be likewise suitably concerned for the bodies of your friends, when they are sick.

IF you would evidence a suitable concern for them, then you must deal tenderly and compassionately with them in their sickness, bear with their impatience and fretting, weary not d

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of them, nor grudge at the trouble they put you to: for shortly you yourselves may be in the like case, when you shall be as great a trouble to others, as your friends are now to you.

Again, it is necessary to employ physicians, and use the best means for the recovery of your friend's health. The means indeed must not be trusted to instead of God, but used in subserviency to him, who hath appointed them, and can only give success to them. We must beware of Asa's sin, that sought to the physicians, and not to the Lord. Let us neither take food nor physic without prayer to God for his blessing thereupon.

DIRECT. VII. When the sickness of your relations or neighbours doth is sue in death, study a Christian and suitable behaviour under such a dispensation.

WHEN a parent loseth a promising child, or a child loseth a loving parent, or when death deprives us of any near relation, it is a speaking and trying providence; and we have much need of grace and counsel from God to carry aright under it. Let us observe these advices.

I. It is necessary in such a case, that we have a tender sense and feeling of Gods afflicting hand. There are two extremes which we must equally avoid, viz. to make light of the death of relations; and to be excessively grieved on that account. God will have us neither to despise his rod, nor to faint under it, Heb.xii. 5. God

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is displeased with those that are stupid and infensible under such afflictions. Why? They defpile his rod, and make light of his corrections. Hence he complains of these, Jer. v. 3 "1 have smitten them, but they have not grieved." God will have us to feel his hand, to enquire into the meaning of the rod, and fearch for these sins that have provoked God to smite us. It is a fign of a naughty, felfish, and unchristian spirit, to be unconcerned for the death of friends: and it is much more so in children. who have a fecret satisfaction in the death of parents, because of the worldly riches or liberty which they get thereby. God useth to follow this wicked temper with his heavy judgments even in this life.

II. Confider, that God is calling you, by the death of others, to keep up lively and lasting impressions of death and eternity upon your spirits. God knoweth how advantageous it would be for men fo to do; and therefore he fets frequent spectacles of mortality before their eyes for this end. But such is the corruption and earthliness of our minds, that we soon forget the thoughts of death. When we see our friends in the pangs of death, or laid in the grave, it strikes us with some fear and concern, to think, that one day this will be our own case; but no fooner is the dead interred, and the grave filled up again, than all thefe ferious thoughts begin to vanish, and men return to their fins and pleasures as before. Ah, what folly is this! Should not men always keep alive the ferious thoughts of death and a future state!

Are we not always alike mortal? Are we not as liable to death's arrest at other times, as

when examples are before our eyes?

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III. When God takes away your children or relations, let it draw your hearts and affections more towards God and things above. As when a shepherd taketh up in his arms a lamb of the flock, the ewe followeth him of her own accord, and will not leave him: fo when the great Shepherd of the sheep taketh a child or friend from you, it should cause you to follow after him, and defire to be with him. But one may say, That is not the case with me; I fear the wolf hath got the straying sheep, and devoured it. Then even that suspicion should make you run to the good Shepherd, abide with him, and keep close by the footsteps of the flock, and beware of straying in these paths wherein destroyers go. When God taketh from you these relations whom you dearly loved, he calls you to take your love off the fading creature, and set it on the eternal Creator: when the weak branch is lopt off, then class to the body of the tree, which will not fail you.

IV. In such trials, study a humble and patient submission to the will of God, who in his sovereign wisdom and pleasure hath taken your child or friend from you. Remember who hath done it, even he, who gave all men their lives, and hath the absolute power and right to dispose of mens lives, as he thinks best. If your fellow-creature do any thing that displeaseth you, you may both ask who did it, and why he did so? But when God doth any thing to

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you, you must remember he is the Potter, and you are the clay; and that he may make or mar his clay vessels, yea, break them in pieces at his pleasure; and "there is none can stay his hand, or fay to him, What dost thou? Be still, and know that I am God," Pfal. xlvi. 10. The mafter of a family gathers at his pleasure the flowers and fruits of his garden; fometimes he cuts off the buds, sometimes he suffers them to blossem; sometimes he gathers the green fruit, sometimes he stays till they be ripe; and every body thinks he may do with his own what he pleafeth; and shall not the Almighty God have liherty much more to dispose of all that grows in his own territories at his pleasure? The master of the family hath not created the trees and plants of his garden; but God hath made and fashioned all the children of men with his almighty hand.

It is the sense of this sovereign right and dominion of God over his creatures, that hath made his people to be silent under the greatest loss. Hence Aaron when he lost his two sons by a sudden and extraordinary stroke, it is said of him, Lev. x 3. "And Aaron held his peace." He opened not his mouth, because it was a sovereign God that did it. So holy Job, when he lost all his children by one blow, patiently submits to this absolute Lord, Job i. 21. "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." Job knew that God's relation to them was far nearer than his, and his right to dispose of them was indisputable. It was a holy and excellent speech of that hon-

ourable person, lord Duplessis, at the death of his only son; "I could not have borne this from a man, but I can from God."

V. Guard against immoderate grief and excessive sorrow for the death of children or near relations; for this is sinful and offensive to God. Now, grief is sinful and immoderate, when it makes you grudge at God's dispensation, murmur at his will, turn unthankful to him for the mercies you enjoy, overlook all bypast favours, and lament a temporal more than a spiritual loss. Alas! there are many who can bewail a dead friend far more than a dead heart, and the loss of a child more than the loss of God's countenance. Now, for preventing this excessive sorrow, consider these things.

and impenitent, you have reason to bless God that the stroke was not at your own life, for then you had been eternally miserable, and without hope. What is the temporal loss of a child, to the eternal loss of thine own soul? O it is far better to be childless and friendless on earth, than to be

hopeless and remediless in hell.

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to complain of any loss or stroke you meet with on earth. 1. If you eye God's sovereignty and power over you, you have cause to be thankful that he hath not annihilated you and your relations both long ere now, seeing he hath as sufficiently and the hath as sufficiently and your relations both long ere now, seeing he hath as sufficiently you from nothing. Though God should dash us against the walls, as a potter doth his vessel, no man could have reason to say, What

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dost thou? or, why dost thou use me so? Jer. xviii. 6. "O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? faith the Lord." Nay, he hath a greater right to deal fo with us, than a potter with his veffel, for God hath contributed all to his creature that it hath; but the potter never made the clay which is the substance of the vessel, nor the water that is needful to make it tractable. All that the potter doth, is only to mould the clay into fuch a shape; befides, the potter's body is no better than the clay he makes his vessel of; nay, perhaps that very clay might once have been some part of the body of a man as good as the potter himself. Now, shall the potter have such absolute power over that which is so near and like to him; and shall not God have it over that which is infinitely distant from him? That word, Dan.iv. 34, 35. "The Most High doth according to his will," is enough to filence the murmurings of all men under strokes and losses.

2. If you eye the hand of God, as most just and righteous in what you have met with, you have no good ground to complain. "Have you not procured ail this to yourself?" Is not God most just in all that hath come upon you? Nay, if you consider your sins, and God's absolute dominion over you, you must own he might have dealt with you in a smarter way than he hath done; instead of one affliction, you might have had a thousand.

3. Look to the mercy that is mixed with the rod. It is a wonder that this great Sovereign, who is so provoked by us, should allow us any

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mercy at all, and yet we receive innumerable benefits from him. Whatever be our afflictions, surely they are far less than our iniquities deserve. Hath he cast your child into the grave? he might justly have thrown your soul into hell. It is of the Lord's mercies you are not consumed. Why should a living man complain? a man out of a grave, and out of hell too, hath surely no reason.

4. If you compare your affliction with the trials of others of God's people, yea, and thefe faints who have been most eminent, you have no reason to grudge at your loss. You have one child dead, but Aaron (who is called the faint of the Lord, Pfal. cvi. 16.) had two at a stroke; nay, Job, whom God commends above all the faints in his day, had all his children flain by one blow, and both these eminent saints had these losses by an immediate and extraordinary stroke from God. Some godly parents have feen their children live to prove feandals to religion, and a grief of mind to themselves, and would have thought it a mercy if God had taken them away when young. Say not then, there is no forrow like your forrow; for the cup which many others have drunk, hath had more bitter ingredients in it than yours.

3dly, Consider, that 'excessive grief cannot better your case, it may well make it worse. If you struggle and contend under God's hand, you act a soolish part; as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke, that by his struggling galls his neck, and makes the yoke the more uneasy: or like a bird sluttering in a net, that, instead of

freeing, doth the more intangle itself. Thus, by immoderate sorrow and fretting under the stroke, you sin the more against God, and make

your burden the more heavy.

4thly. Remember the transactions of thy soul with God in the day thou enteredst into covenant with him. When thou sawest thyself on the brink of hell, and a burden of fin preffing thee down, and no hope for thee but in Christ; then your cry was, " None but Christ: take children, relations, riches, and all things in a world from me, and give me Christ. up myself, and all I have, to be disposed at thy pleasure; thy will, Lord, shall be my will," &c Now, God is taking thee at thy word, and trying thy fincerity in what thou faidst and professedst to him so solemnly. He hath disposed of thy dear relation as pleased him: Obeliever, dost thou rue the bargain? wouldst thou take thy word again? where is thy covenanted submission to the will of God, and thy promised contentment with all his disposals?

nanted God is better to thee than all the friends in the world? cannot God soon make up the greatest loss to thee, if thou turn to him by prayer, and pour out thy heart and sorrows in his bosom? What are the world's comforts to God's comforts? a smile of God's face in prayer, can soon sweeten thy bitter cup, and make thee forget all thy sorrows, Psal. xciv. 19. "In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my soul." The Author of the Fulfilling of the Scriptures tells us of one

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Patrick Mackilwrae, an eminent saint in the west of Scotland, who having lost his dear and only son, got to his closet, and there poured out his soul freely to the Lord. When he came out to his friends at length, who were waiting to comfort him, and fearing how he would take such a heavy stroke, he returned from prayer with a cheerful countenance, and told some of his friends, who asked him the reason of his cheerfulness, "that he had got that in his retirement with the Lord, that to have it afterwards renewed, he would be content to lose a son every day."

few days journey behind him for whom you mourn, and that you will quickly overtake him, and be with him again. This allayed David's forrow for his child, 2 Sam. xii. 23. "I shall go to him." It is our expecting to live here, to enjoy the comfort of relations, that commonly makes us grieve so much for their death; for if we looked on ourselves as men that were to die in a few days, we would not be so troubled for our friends, that are gone but a little

space before us.

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have more reason to rejoice with them than to mourn for them; seeing they are unspeakably happier where they now are, than they could have been with you. It is the most fervent desire and wish of every true Christian to be in heaven: and will you grieve, because God hath taken your relations thither, where you desire to be yourself above all things? As Christ said to his

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disciples before his death, John xiv. 28. "If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I go unto the Father:" so, if your departed friend could speak to you from heaven, he would say, "If you loved me with a pure spiritual love, ye would rejoice that I am gone to my Father, where I am more happy than you can possibly conceive of me."

Object. "Had I ground to think that my friend is gone to heaven, it would ease me; but,

alas, I fear it is otherwise."

Answ. 1. It doth not belong to us to dive into the eternal state and condition of these that are gone off the stage. These secret things belong to God, who exerciseth his mercy or justice towards sinners according to his sovereign will.

2. Supposing the worst, you ought to submit to the incontroulable sovereignty of God, who hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. "He is of one mind, and who can turn him?" The Lord cut off Aaron's two sons in the very act of sin and rebellion against him, and yet Aaron held his peace, and so ought you.

3. Whatever be the lot of others hereafter, you have reason to be thankful to God for his distinguishing mercy, in saving you from these states that others fall into, and giving you good hope through grace of glorifying God above

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DIRECT. VIII. Let the sickness and death of others be a warning to you in time of health, to make due preparation for the time of sickness and of dying, which is before your hands.

TATHEN you fee your friends and neigh-W bours in a fickly, weak, or dying condition, the language of the dispensation to you that are in health is, Prepare for sickness also. Nay, the feeble voice of the fick doth proclaim this warning as loudly, as if they should lift up their voice like a trumpet, and fay to you, "Remember that you must lie in the same case ere long; you must also groan under pain, lose your strength and beauty, leave your mirth and company, bid adieu to all the world, and look out for the grim messenger death, that is a-coming to dissolve the earthly tabernacle, send 10 the body to lie in a putrifying grave, and the foul nd to stand before God's tribunal, to be sentenced to an endless state." This will thy case, O ne young man, strong man, healthful man, as really in a little, as it is of these now before your eyes. O how foon will it come! what thoughts will you then have of the world, of fin, and vain company! Will any thing comfort you then but the favour of God, the love of Christ, and the review of a holy well-spent life? Wherefore do with all thy might now what thy hand finds to do: employ the time of health well in preparing for fickness, and leave nothing to do in time of fickness, which is a most unfit season for a man to do soul-work and salvation-work in.

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I. I shall begin with those of the family where the harbingers of death do presently reside. Surely the warnings of fickness and death ought to be louder in your ears than others, and most diligently hearkened unto by you, that lodge under the same roof with the messengers of the king of terrors. 1st, Remember that word, 1 Pet. v. 6. "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God." It well becomes guilty finners, all the members of the family, to be humble before a holy God, when he is smiting any of the them. Humbly acknowledge his fovereignty and absolute dominion over you, faying, "Lord, thou art the author and founder of families, and thou mayit afflict and punish them as thou thinkest fit. Thou settest the solitary in families, and multipliest their number; and thou mayst diminish them, yea, lay them defolate according to thy pleasure. Thou mightest have made all the members of the family fick, as well as one; thou mightest have given a deadly blow to parents, children, and servants at once, yea, have made the house in which we live a common grave, and builed us all together in its ruins." Humbly acknowledge the justice and mercy of God in the present visiation. "Lord, instead of one, we all deserved to have been thrown on fick-beds, and all of us to have been smitten by Thou punishest us less than our iniquities deserve." Acknowledge also God's wisdom and love in the present affliction, and humbly Submit to take the cup which he hath mingled for you. "The cup which our heavenly Father hath ordered for this family, shall we not drink it! It is a gracious and wife God that doth what is done in the family; therefore it is our part to be dumb, and not to open our mouths to

quarrel it."

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adly, The command which the king of Nineveh gave to all his subjects, when threatened with ruin, Jonah iii. 8. is very proper for a master of a family to give to all under his charge, when sickness doth rage among them; "Fast, and cry mightily to God, and turn every one from his evil way .-- Who can tell if God will turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?"- When the destroying angel gets a commission to smite families with mortal and infectious diseases, which sometimes go from house to house like a plague, sweeping many old and young off the stage; then especially it should be a time of mighty crying and pleading with God for mercy. And fince our pleading is wholly ineffectual without an atoning facrifice to incenfed justice, let us not forget to bring the all-sufficient sacrifice of Christ's blood alongst with us, and plead it with God for averting his wrath from our houses and families. As Moses said to Aaron in a time of common calamity, Num. xiv. 46. fo may I fay to you that are heads of families, "Take a cenfer and incense, and go quickly and make an atonement for them: for there is wrath gone out from om the Lord; the plague is begun." Bring the inbly cense of Christ's satisfaction, that great atoneled ment to divine justice, which was typissed by he the legal facrifices and oblations. Humbly and

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carnestly plead that great sacrifice with God, for turning away the sierceness of his wrath. Get the bunch of hyssop, faith, in order to the sprinkling of your houses with that atoning blood, that so you and your families may be

among the preserved in Christ Jesus.

Lastly, Let all in the family where sickness is, and especially the head of it, remember that word, Job xxii. 23. " Thou shalt put away iniquity far from thy tabernacles." God hath fent fickness with this message to you, " Search out family-fins, whether of omission or commisfion; mourn over them, turn from them, banish them far away. Let no vice lodge under your roof. Let family-worship be no more neglected, nor flightly performed. Let God have both the morning and evening facrifice." Now, if the members of these families visited with fickness, who are in health for the present, would thus humble themselves, cry to God, plead the blood of Christ, and reform what is amiss among them; the present affliction would be fanctified, and they in some measure prepared for the like trial, when God shall be pleafed to put the cup in their hands.

II. In the next place, let me warn all the friends and neighbours of the fick, whether they be in the family or not, to improve the day of health, in making ready for the time of fickness. Be much in the exercise of self examination, humiliation for sin, believing in Christ, renewing covenant with God, mortifying of sin, trimming the lamp, meditating of heaven, living by faith, deniedness to the world, studying

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concerning all which, I have given directions in the foregoing chapters of this book, when speaking to the sick and distressed. These exercises are not only proper for the sick, but also for these in health; and are suitable preparations for sickness and death, to be studied by all men in every condition. But there are some things surther most necessary to be minded by people in time of their health, in order to prepare them for the time of sickness and of dying, before it come.

1st, Make your latter-will, and keep it by you, that you may not be encumbered with your worldly affairs, in time of fickness, or at a dying-hour. Surely it is great wisdom to put this by-hand in time of health. But I have spoken largely of this Chap. I. Dir. 6.

adly, Take heed in time of health, that you lay not up fad provision against the day of sickness, by your careless and untender walk. As it is fin that brings on fickness upon us, so it is fin that embitters it unto us. O beware of all known fin, and particularly the fin of earthlymindedness, unthankfulness for mercies, lukewarmness in religion, neglect to improve Christ, neglect of prayer, and formality in it, quenching of the Spirit, falling from your first love, breach of vows, miscarrying under signal merties, sinning after aifflctions, turning to old fins. Guard against these evils now in time of health, otherwise they will put thorns in your pillow when sickness cometh. Dare not to live in such a course as you would not adventure to die

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in. How do you know but your next step may be into the grave? and would you be willing to lie down there in your sins, with earthly, dead, formal, wandering, and unbelieving hearts?

3dly, Sit loose from the world, and live as strangers in it, that you may be able to pack and be gone from it upon short warning. Let death find you dead before-hand, dead to the world. If your affections be glewed to the world, it will be a violent rending and sad parting you will have with it when the dying hour cometh. You will be ready, like Lot's wife, to linger, hanker, and look greedily back again.

4thly, Keep short reckonings with God and conscience, that you may not have old scores to reckon upon when you come to the death-bed. O what stinging pain and torment may one sin unmourned for cost you at that time! Let conscience then bring in the accounts of every day before you sleep, and speedily take up every controversy that may fall out betwixt God and

thy foul.

death, that you may learn to be acquaint and familiar with it; as Job was, who faid, beforehand, "to corruption, Thou art my father; and to the worm, Thou art my mother and my fister," Job xvii. 14. For this cause the Egyptians used to place a dead man's scull in some conspicuous place of their rooms; likewise the Jews had their sepulchres in their gardens of pleasure, that so in midst of their delights they might think on their dying time. We read of

Philip king of Macedon, that ordered a page every morning to rouze him from sleep with these words, "O king, remember thou art a mortal man." By this often-repeated lesson, helaboured to humble his lofty mind, and make his acquaintance with death, that it might not seem strange or surprising to him when it should actually come and snatch him away.

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6thly, Study to spend every day as it were to be your last, and perform every duty as is were the last, still looking on sickness and death as very near. That which makes most men so unconcerned about fickness, death, and eternity, is, they view them as things afar off, at thirty or forty years distance. "They think their time will be long here: why, they are healthy, of a strong constitution, and their fathers lived fo long;" which furely are false rules to judge by. It was the expectation of many years that helped on the ruin of that rich fool in the gospel. It were far better for every man to look on himself as standing every day and night at the very door of eternity; and hundreds of diseases ready to open the door and let him in. When you lie down at night, leave your heart with Christ, and compose your spirits so, as if you were not to awake till the heavens are no more; for certainly that night cometh, of which you will never fee the morning, or that morning of which you will never fee the night. But which of your mornings, or nights these will be, you know not, feeing your times are not in your own hands.

7thy, Set apart some time, daily, for think-

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ing, in a retired way, on your time that is past, and upon eternity that is to come. glect of this duty of meditation, and retired thinking, is very prejudicial, both to the godly and ungodly. It was David's practice to think, and to think upon his ways; which engaged him to reform whatever he found amis in them, Pfal. cxix. 59. Oh! it is the ruin of many a foul, they are utter strangers to this way of hinking. I have read of a father, who on his death-bed, left it as a solemn charge upon his only fon, who was a prodigal, that he should spend a quarter of an hour every day in retired thinking, and let him chuse any subject he pleased. The son thinks this an casy task, undertakes it, and after his father's death set himself to perform his promise. One day he thinks upon his bypast pleasures; another day he contrives his future delights; after a while he begins to think feriously what might be his father's design in laying this task upon him: at length he thinks, his father was a wife and good man, therefore furely he intended and hoped that, among the rest of his meditations, he would fome time or other think of religion. When this had truly poffeffed his thoughts, one thought and question comes upon the back of another, about his bypast life and future state, that he could not contain himfelf in so short a confinement, but was that night without sleep; yea, and afterward could have no rest till he became seriously religious. O that I could persuade all careless and unthinking fouls to go and do likewife! Ah! how many fpend their days in a hurry about their worldly affairs, and perish for want of thinking!

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8thly, Among other subjects of your retired thoughts, fpend fome time in thinking, how awful and terrible a thing it must be for a poor Christless soul to make its appearance before an angry God after death, "For who (faith the prophet) can dwell with devouring fire? who can abide with everlasting burnings?" I have read of a certain king of Hungary, who being on a time marvellously sad and heavy, his brother, who was a brisk and gallant man, would needs know the reason: "Oh brother, (saith he), I have been agreat sinner against God, and I know not how I shall appear before his judgmentfeat." His brother answered, "These are but melancholy thoughts;" and fo made light of them, as most courtiers use to do. The king replied nothing at that time; but the custom of that country was, (the government being abfolute), if the executioner founded a trumpet at a man's door, he was presently to be led to execution. The king fent the executioner in the dead time of the night, and caused him found his trumpet at his brother's door, who hearing and feeing the messenger of death, fprang in trembling into his brother's prefence. falls down upon his knees, and befeeches the king to let him know wherein he had offended "O brother, (faid the king), you never offended me, but loved me; but is the fight of an earthly executioner so terrible to thee; and shall not I, who am so great a sinner, fear much more to be brought to the judgment-feat of an angry God!"

9thly, Think often how religiously men use

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to wish they had lived, when they come to the fick and dying time. These who have spent their time most carelessly, begin to have other notions of religion when they fee the grim messenger approaching. Go to their bed-sides, and ask them, Whether sloth or diligence, formality or fervency, drinking or praying, loving the world or loving Christ, be the best; would they not tell you, that there is none so wise as they that are most religious? Think, O man, in health, with thyself, if thou wast just now upon thy death-bed, and fawest thy friends standing mourning round about thee, but unable to help thee, what would be thy thoughts and discourse at that time? Othen, let some of the same thoughts and discourse fill up every day and hour of thy life now. Why, thou knowest not but this moment thou mayst be as near death, as if thy friends and physicians too were despairing of thy life, and had given you over for dead.

nothly. Be employed now in fighting the good fight of faith. You have many enemies to deal with, and death is the last of them. Would you obtain the victory over them? Then get on the Christian armour, and make much use of the shield of faith. We read in the book of Esther, that king Ahasuerus would not recal the proclamation he had emitted against the Jews; but he gave them full liberty to take up arms to defend themselves, and attack their enemies: so here, God will not recal the sentence of death he hath past upon all men in the garden; but nevertheless he allows, yea commissionates all true Israelites to take up arms against death, to conquer and trample it under foot by faith.

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Lastly, Be busy now in health, providing, and laying up a stock against the time of sickness and affliction; which may contribute to your comfortable living then, when the world's good things will be tasteless and comfortless to you. As these who have a voyage to go, do victual the ship; and these who have a siege to hold out, take in provisions: even so do ye.

cfpecially a flock of faith, of patience, of humility, felf-denial, &c. There will be use for all these then. A little grace, or a little faith, is not enough; for this will faint under afflictions. We read, Matth. xiv. that, when the winds began to blow fiercely, Peter's little faith began to fail. You have need of a great measure of patience against that time, that you may wait quietly on God, till he come to your relief. You know not but he may lengthen out your trials and tarry till the fourth watch of the night before he come with deliverance.

2. Provide a stock of evidences or marks of grace, and of the love of God, that you may be able to affert your interest in him as your portion in Christ, and may be persuaded, that neither death nor life will ever separate you from him.

3. Get a stock of divine experiences. Lay up all the experiences you have had of God's loving-kindness, and these will give great relief and encouragement to the soul in the day of distress.

4. Lay up a stock of sermons. Treasure up the counsels and cordials which they bring you from God's word, that so you may, according to Isa. xlii. 23. "hear for the time to come;"

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and especially for sick-beds, when you cannot get sermons to hear. Then it is, that you you ought to live and feed upon the fermons you have heard.

5. Lay up a stock of prayers. Be much in wrestling with God for help and throughbearing in the day of affliction; and fo you may expect the gracious returns thereof in the day

of calamity.

6. Provide a stock of promises. Be now gathering these sweet cordials from God's word, lay them up in your heart and memory, and irg they will be very refreshing and supporting to you in the day of affliction.

DIRECT. IX. Let these who are in health set about the work of repentance, and turning to God in Christ timeously and quickly: and beware of delaying this work until the time of fickness and of dying.

GOD's command to you is, to fet about the work presently, without any delay, Heb. iii. 15. "To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." Matth. xxi. 28. "Go work to-day in my vineyard." Eccles. xii. 1. "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth." Well, God's voice to you, O man in health, is to-day. But the devil's voice to you is to-morrow. And which of the two will you hearken to? Surely it is your wisdom to obey the voice of your Creator and Friend, and not of your enemy and destroyer. Why, to-day thou art in health, to-morrow thou mayst be in sickness; to-day thou art on earth, to-morrow hou mayst be in hell; to-day Christ is inviting you to come to him, to-morrow he may be fenou encing you to depart from him. And consider, hat the devil, who tempts you to delay this in lay, will be as ready to tempt you to the ar- ame to-morrow; and so the devil's to-morrow will never come. It will still be to-morrow lay with him till the last hour, that so he may get you cheated out of your whole time and salvaow ion together.

rd, Here I shall endeavour two things; 1. Bring arguments to persuade you to repent and close with the offers of Chrst presently, without any delay, as God requires. 2. Shew the evil and danger of delaying till the time of fickness and let of dying. As to the first, viz. Arguments for present repentance, and against delaying the

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1st, Consider the uncertainty of your life and time to repent. Your life is but a vapour, a litle warm breath that is going out and in at your nostrils, which may be stopped by death tre you be aware; thou knowest not what will to-morrow, Prov. xxvii.1. It was the faying of a godly man, when invited to a feast upon the morrow, "I have not had a morrow, for hese many years." It was a bad use these Epiures made of this uncertainty, Ifa. xxii. 13. "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we shall die." It is much wiser to say, " Let us pray, and turn to the Lord, for to-morrow we shall die." Nay, you have not fecurity for one hour prepent in; for God hath a thousand diseases and accidents ready to stop your breath, and

that end your days, whenever he pleaseth to give them orders. There are many secure sinners, in a hard who presume on long life, but there are none is un nearer destruction than such; for God loves to will disappoint these that promise themselves a long conf life in fin and impenitency, as he did that derf rich man who was laying up for many years, Luke xii. 19. "This night shall thy soul be required of thee." And O what a dark and difmal night will it be, if death come before thy repentance! O man, thou never didst lie down one night with affurance of rifing again; thounever heardst one sermon with assurance of God hearing another; thou never didft draw one his breath with affurance of drawing another. What madness is it then to delay salvationwork one day or hour longer, and so to leave the weightiest matter in the world at the greatest uncertainty!

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adly, Consider, that though God in his wonderful mercy and patience should prolong your tha days, yet the longest life is short enough for the work you have to do, suppose you begin it pre-Sently. Nay, had you Methusalem's years to lay spend, they would be no more than sufficient to repent and mourn for the fins and guil which you have been fo long contracting; to reform and amend the many things that have been amiss; to perform all the duties incum-bent on you; to make sure your calling and election, and put your souls in a good posture first and preparation for an eternal state, and ge and them made meet to be partakers of the inherit it tance of the faints in light. Now, do ye think

that all this work can be done in an instant, or in a time of sickness, or old age, when ye are hardly fit to do anything? When a man's spirit is unable to bear the infirmities of nature, how will he be able to bear the lashes of a guilty conscience, or a wounded spirit? When the understanding is weak, the memory frail, the will obstinately bent the wrong way, by a long custom of sinning, and neglecting of duty; will that be a fit time to begin the work of repentance and conversion to God? When nature is decayed, and the candle of life just sinking in the socket, will you begin then to act for God, and make your light shine before men to his glory? O remember, your work is long, your time is short; and though you begin this very hour, you will have no time to spare.

3dly, Delay not this work, because it is not at in your power to do it when you please. It is a delusion of the devil, to imagine you may renpent when you will. No, no; it is God only that giveth repentance, and he gives it and to whom he pleaseth, Acts v.13. And it is a mere peradventure, if ever he give it to a deto laying sinner, 2 Tim. ii. 25. When is it that you may have hopes he will give repentance, but when he calls you to it, and prescribes means when he calls you to it, and prescribes means to be used for that end? Now that is to-day. " To-day, if ye will hear his voice: now is the im accepted time, now is the day of salvation." and To-day, when God is calling, and the Spirit ure striving, is the time of finding the Lord, and ge and getting repentance from him. To-morrow erigit may be too late; the Lord's hand may be inl

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closed, and the door of mercy shut. If you refuse the Spirit when he strives with you, he may leave you, and never put another ferious thought in your heart of turning to the Lord. O defer not feeking repentance till it be too late: for there is a time when the Lord will not be found, and then repentance will not be found, though you feek it with tears. Indeed, God hath promised mercy to penitent sinners: but he hath no where promised the aids of his grace and Spirit to them that put off their repentance: and he hath no where promifed acceptance to mere grief and forrow for fin, without faith, and fruits meet for repentance: he hath no where promised to pardon these, who only promise to leave their sins, when they can keep them no longer.

4thly, The longer repentance and closing with Christ is delayed, the difficulty thereof is every day increased. Why, 1. Because of the deceit-ful nature of sin, which doth daily bewitch and harden the heart more and more in the practice of it. 2. Custom in any thing hath a strong influence on us, and becomes a kind of second nature, and breeds an almost invincible inclination to whatsoever we have long addicted ourselves unto, whether it be in actions natural or moral. Hence Ovid gives that good advice.

Sed propera, nec te venturas differ in horas; Qui non est hodie, cras minus aptus erit.

" Be speedy, put not off till another time;

"He who is not prepared to-day, will be more unprepared to-morrow."

He that goes on from day to day in fin, will find his indisposition to repent daily increased, the habits of fin strengthened, and himself brought at length under the power of an inveterate custom. And if it be hard to break any custom, much more a custom in sinning, which is fo agreeable to depraved nature. Hence faith the Spirit of God, Jer. xiii. 23. " Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil." 3. The longer Satan keeps possession, the more difficult will his ejection prove. The devils that possessed the man from the womb up, could not be cast out but by some extraordinary way. 4. Delays bring on spiritual judgments from God, such as judicial hardness on the heart, which will make repentance impossible, according to that terrible place, Ifa. vi. 9, 10. "Make the heart of this people fat," &c. which is quoted no less than fix times in the New Testament, as if it belonged only to them that linger and fit impenitent under gospel-calls.

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Lastly, We would reckon such delays madpess in earthly affairs, which are but trisles when
compared to salvation-work. If a man's house
were on fire, we would count him mad, if he
should say, it is time enough to quench it tomorrow; or, if he were stung with a venomous
serpent, he would be mad that neglected to seek
a present cure: or, if he had got posson in his
stomach, he would never think he could soon
enough vomit it up. If a malesactor were condemned to a cruel death to-morrow, but had

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a promise of a remission if he should look after it to-day; would he be so foolish as delay it till next morning? But how much greater madness is it to delay repenting and fleeing to Christ, when God's calls and promifes relate to the present time, and our danger in delaying is infinitely greater than in any of the foresaid cases? Surely there is no sting so dangerous, no poison so deadly as fin; and can we too foon feek after the balm of Gilead, the blood of Christ for its cure? There is no death like the second death. no fire so dreadful as the eternal fire of God's wrath: Now, this fire is already kindled against your souls; and if it be not timeously quenched, it will burn to the lowest hell. no time to get it extinguished, by fleeing to the blood of Jesus.

II. The next thing is to shew the evil and danger of delaying this work until the time of fickness and of dying. Alas, it is the common practice of the most part! But consider, 1st, What wretched ingratitude and baseness there is in it. Whether is it fit ye should give the best of your time to God that made you, or to the devil that feeks your destruction? Is it reasonable that the devil should feast on the slower and prime of your youth and strength, and your Creator have no other but the fragments of the devil's table? When the dregs of your time are come, your strength gone, your senses failed, your understanding and memory weak, your affections spent upon the creature, yea, when you are good for nothing elfe; will ye be fo base as think, you are then good enough for r

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God, and for falvation-work, which requires all your strength and might? But remember, if you be so base as reserve the dregs of your time for God, you may expect he will be so just as reserve the dregs of his wrath for you, according to that word, Mal. i. 14. "Cursed be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and facrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing." Your youth, strength, health, gifts, and talents, are the males of the flock; if you give these to the devil, and reserve the weakness of sickness and old-age for God, you draw down his curse upon your heads; and how long will you be able to bear up under the weight of God's curse? Now, O delaying finners, why should you be so ungrateful to God, and enjurious to yourselves? God had early thoughts of mercy to you; and will you have nothing but late thoughts of duty to him? Christ did not defer his dying for us till he was old; and shall we defer living to him, till we be old? Oh, we do not deal with God as we would have him to deal with us. When we need help in trouble, we cry, as Pfal. cii. 2. "Lord, hear me; in the day when I call, answer me speedily." To-day we still make the scason of mercy, but to-morrow the feafon for duty. When mercy is delayed, we impatiently cry, How long? how long? We will not wait God's holy But alas! we would have God to wait our finful leisure. Oh, let us be ashamed of such difingenuous dealings with our Creator.

adly, Death may get a commission to take you off suddenly, without giving you any time to

repent. You are not fure to fee the evening ftar of sickness, before the night of death overtake you, or that you will have any warning given you before the fatal stroke. For how many are there who project long lives, and look for time before death to repent, that get a furprifing call to flit from the earthly tabernacle, and have not one minute to provide another lodging? How many are drowned by a fudden ftorm at fea? And how many killed by outward accidents at land? Some drop down fuddenly in the streets; some die sitting in their chairs; fome go well to bed at night, and never fee the morning; some die as quickly by a fit of an epilepsy, or apoplexy, as if shot with a gun. Thus thousands are hurried into eternity, and presented before a tribunal, without being allowed so much time as to think one serious thought, or speak one word? not one moment to consider where they are going, or to cry to God for mercy. And how know you but this may be your case at death? Must it not be the greatest folly then, to delay your repentance to a dying time, when it may not be one minute long?

3dly, Though you may have some time to lie on sick-beds, how know ye but your sickness may be such as shall incapacitate you for spiritual work? Some we see are so oppressed with continual slumbering and sleeping, even when death is nearest, that they are in no case to think or speak of these things that belong to their eternal state. Others, in high severs, are troubled with rovings; and have no use of their

reason, so that they are not capable to fettle their worldly affairs; and how much less are they fit to secure their souls eternal concerns, at that time? - Some, again, are fo racked with extreme pains and agonies, impatient frettings, and bitter uneafiness, that they cannot get one fettled thought about their fouls present or future state. Others are so filled with terror and amazement, at the view of approaching death and eternity, that they cannot compose their thoughts to exemine themselves, confess their sins, act faith in a Saviour, or follow any direction that is given them; but go off the stage in a confusion, being incapable to do any thing to purpose for their fouls. Some their distemper is such, that they are brought to a great strait betwixt the word of God and the physician. The word of God and his ministers tell them, if they do not mourn for their fins, and wrefile for mercy, they cannot be faved: but faith the physician, if you trouble yourfelf with fad and melancholy thoughts, you prejudice you body, and hazard your life. Oh! is this a fit time then to begin your preparation for another world?

and vexed by many in the day of health, he is provoked to leave them on death-beds to the hardness of their own hearts: And so they remain like stocks and stones, dead and stupid to

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5thly, The devil, that was buly all your lives to keep you from repentance, will not be idle at this time; nay, he will be more active then than

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ever to ruin you, either by causing you to split on the rock of presumption or of dispair. Sometimes he will tell sinners then, "You need not trouble yourselves about your souls: God is more merciful than to damn you; the repentance you have already, will serve the turn." But if this will not quiet them, he will study to drive them to dispair, by telling them, "They have lost the season of repentance and closing with Christ; and now there is no remedy, no hope for them, and it is in vain to use any further means." O then, do not hearken to Satan now, when he tempts you to delay your repentance.

6thly, Whatever appearance of repentance some dying persons may have, let that be no encouragement to put off till that time. Why, there lieth a just suspicion upon a late repentance, that it is feldom found and fincere. It is no found work, that arifeth more from fears of hell, than from any real heatred of fin; more from love to felf, than love to God. And it is to be feared, that death-bed repentance is mostly of this fort, feeing ordinarily it confifteth more in grief and fear, prayers and promises, than in a hearty loathing of fin, love to holiness, or willingness to accept of Jesus Christ: for have we not seen many of these penitents, who, in the view of death, have professed great forrow for their wicked lives, and made folemn promifes of amendment; yet when they have happened to recover, all their righteousness hath vanished, and they have returned to their former fins as greedily as ever? And, O delaying sinner, what ground have you to think that your death-bed repentance will be any better than theirs? Be wife then in time, set heartily about salvation-work in the day of your health, and do not leave the weightiest work to the weakest time.

Object. I. "But hath not God promised mercy to them that repent of their sins at any time?"

Answ. Yes, to them that repent truly and fincerely: but do not think that it is in your power to repent so, at any time you please; no, it is impossible you can do it without the influence and affistance of the Spirit of God. And God hath no where promised this to these who put off their repentance to a death-bed. There is a great difference betwixt a fick man's howling upon his bed, and fincere gospel repenting. I grant, true repentance is never too late; but Oh! late repentance is seldom true. True repentance is that which hath a care to walk holily, or hath works meet for repentance joined with it. Hence repentance is not only called METANOIA, a change of mind; but also META-MELEIA, an after care. Now for a death-bed repentance, that hath no fuch holy care or good works, I know no promise in the Bible that annexeth falvation unto it.

Object. II. "Do not we read in Christ's parable of the labourers, Matth. xx. that some were hired and brought into the vineyard at the eleventh hour, and got the same reward with those that were hired at the third and sixth hour?"

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Answ. 1. These that were brought in so late, could say for themselves vers. 6. "that no man had hired them," or had offered to hire them before; they did no sooner hear the gospel-call, and offers of salvation through Christ tendered to them. But Oh! this will stand you in no stead, who have had many a call and offer made you at the third, sixth, and ninth hour, and have resisted and resused them: you will not have it to say at the eleventh hour, as these had, "No man hath hired us."

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at the eleventh hour, and not being sooner hired, yet they were labourers in the vineyard, and wrought one hour therein faithfully, in obedience to their Lord's command; and so brought forth some fruits meet for repentance, and were accepted. But this is no encouragement to any to expect to be brought in at the twelfth hour, when there is no time to work, nor bring forth any fruits to testify the sincerity of their repentance; we have no promise of acceptance made to such.

Object. 111. "The penitent thief on the cross fought mercy from Christ at the last hour, and

got it."

Answ. That is a fingular instance, and gives no encouragement to delaying sinners. The scriptures contain a history of more than four thousand years, and yet during all the time we have but one example of a man that truly and sincerely repented when he came to die. And in this man's case there was such an extaordinary conjunction of cirumstances, as never hap-

pened before, and can never fall out again to the end of the world. This man had the happiness to die close by the newly pierced and bleeding wounds of a crucified Jesus, when he was lifted up from the earth in the height of his love, drawing finners to falvation; which was a juncture that can never have a parallel. Again, the man never had any offer of Christ, nor day of grace before now; he furrendered himself upon the very first call: and his faith in Christ at this time was truly fingular and miraculous. He was defigned by Heaven to be made a rare monument of the power of Christ's grace, and a special trophy of his victory over the devils and wicked men, at a time when they feemed to triumph over him, as one crucified through weakness.

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From all which we may fee, that this example was extraordinary, and affords no ground for the prefumption of delaying finners. may as well cast yourselves into the sea, in hopes of preservation by a whale, from the example of Jonah, as defer repentance now, in hopes of repenting on a death-bed, from the example of the thief on the cross. Besides, your way of finning differs vaftly from his. He was not guilty of presumption, as you are; he did not flight Christ's calls and offers in the day of his health, and delay his repenting and clofing with Christ, in hopes of an opportunity for them at the hour of death, as you do. Do you know what God determines concerning prefumptuous finning? You may see it, Numb. xv. 28, 30, 31. " And the priests shall make an atonement

for the foul that finneth ignorantly, &c. But the foul that doth ought presumptuously, (whether he be born in the land, or a stranger), the same reproacheth the Lord: and that soul shall be cut off from among his people; because he hath despised the word of the Lord." O presumptuous delaying sinner, let this word of the Lord awaken you to a speedy and present resolution to obey his voice. "Return ye now every one from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings good," Jer. xviii. 11. Now is the accepted time: if ye will hear his voice, it must be to-day. Lord, save us from hardening our hearts. Amen.

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Of the late Reverend

Mr JOHN WILLISON

TO HIS

WIFE and CHILDREN,

Found among his Papers after his Death, dated the 10th of November 1749.

To my WIFE.

My dear,
MY distress calls me to think of parting with
you; the will of the Lord be done. I thank
you for your tender care of me; may the Lord
bless and reward you for it, and sanctify your
own tenderness, and support you under it. As
you have studied to live a life of faith and
prayer all your days, so I hope and believe you
will continue to the end. In all your difficulties
and fears encourage yourself in the Lord your
God. Commit your ways to him; trust him that
is faithful and true. I resign you, my dear, to
the Husband of husbands, our dearest Lord
Jesus Christ.

To my CHILDREN.

DEAR children, your earthly father must leave you; your heavenly Father is immortal. O! cleave fast to him Trifle not about your fouls concerns in time of health; mind thefe things as the one thing needful; this you will not repent of when you come within a near view of death, and endless eternity. O Sirs! press for clear views of your interest in Christ, the only Surety and Saviour of sinners. Among other evidences of it, live by faith on him, and study holinets in heart and life. Dear Sirs, think how you will be able to stand before Christ your Judge at the last day, unless you have Christ's image on you, and be made new creatures. Lord make you all fuch, and blefs you with his best bleffing! My bleffing be upon you all .-. What means God gave me, I have bestowed them on you, or left them to you. Be kind and careful of your mother while you have her. And let none of you forget, that though I go before you to the dust, you must all quickly follow me. O! that we may all meet together at the right hand of our bleffed Redeemer, to fee his face, and fing his praise. The time is near, be ye therefore also ready.

Now, my dear wife and children, remember what is above as the words of your affectorate husband and loving father, who being dead, yet hereby speaketh to you for your eternal good and happiness; may they sink into your heart!

So prayeth,

JOHN WILLISON,

